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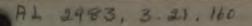
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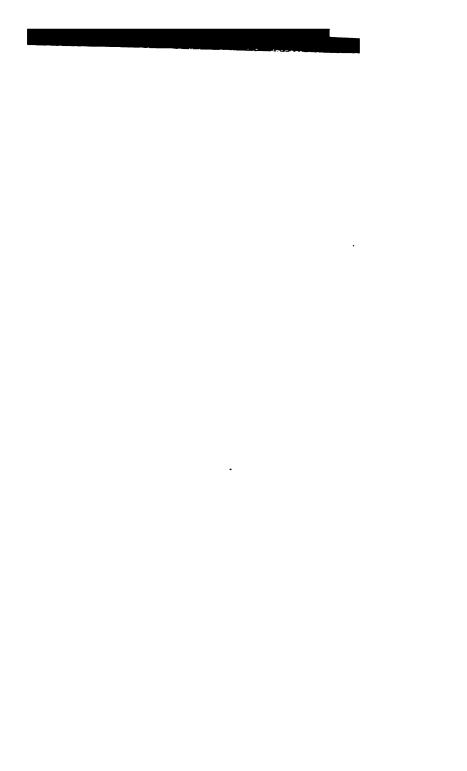


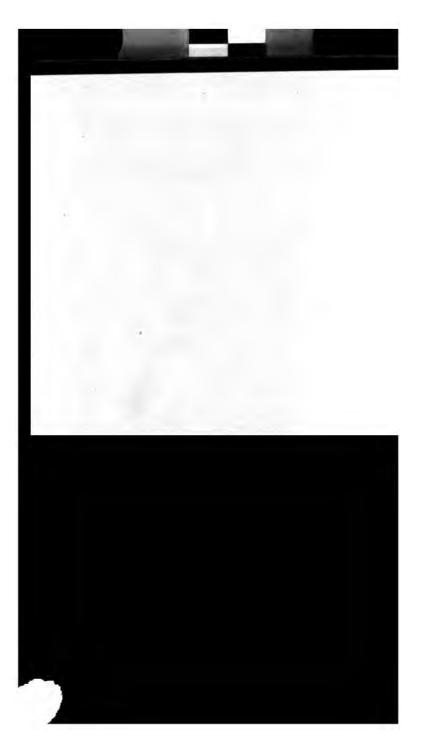
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The Song of the Cardinal Freckles What I Have Done with Birds At the Foot of the Rainbow A Girl of the Limberlost Birds of the Bible The Harvester Laddie

BY
GENE STRATTON-PORTER

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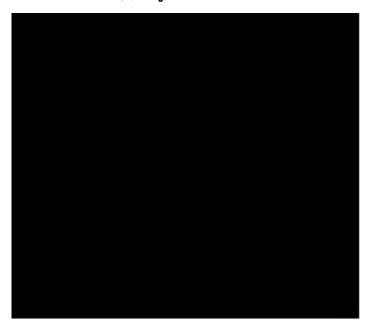
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TO MORNING-FACE



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CHARACTERS

MICHAEL O'HALLORAN, Who Was Square.
PEACHES, Michael's Family.
THE SUNSHINE NURSE, Who Helped Mickey.
DOUGLAS BRUCE, A Corporation Lawyer.
LESLIE WINTON, Who Demanded Joy From Life.
MR. MINTURN, A Multiopolis Politician.
MRS. MINTURN, A Woman Devoted to Society.
JAMES JR. and MALCOLM, the Minturns' Sons.

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CHAPTER I

HAPPY HOME IN SUNRISE ALLEY

"I see the parks are full of rich folks dolling up the dogs, feeding them candy and sending them out for an airing in their automobiles; so it's up to the poor people to look after the homeless children, isn't it?" Mickey.

WKID, come on! Be square!"
"You look out what you say to me."

"But ain't you going to keep your word?"

- "Mickey, do you want your head busted?"
- "Naw! But I did your work so you could loaf; now I want the pay you promised me."
 - "Let's see you get it! Better take it from me, hadn't you?"
 - "You're twice my size; you know I can't, Jimmy!"
 - "Then you know it too, don't you?"
- "Now look here kid, it's 'cause you're getting so big that folks will be buying quicker of a little fellow like me; so you've laid in the sun all afternoon while I been running my legs about off to sell your papers; and when the last one is gone, I come and pay you what they sold for; now it's up to you to do what you promised."

"Why didn't you keep it when you had it?"

"Cause that ain't business! I did what I promised r and square; I was giving you a chance to be square

'Oh! Well next time you won't be such a fool!"

limmy turned to step from the gutter to the sidewalk. To things happened to him simultaneously: Mickey bene a projectile and smashed with the force of a wiry on the larger boy's head, while above both, an athletic n was thrust out, and gripped him by the collar.

Douglas Bruce was hurrying to see a client before he ould leave his office; but in passing a florist's window his was attracted by a sight so beautiful he paused an innt, considering. It was spring; the Indians were composed to Multiopolis to teach people what the wood ds had put into their hearts about flower magic.

The watcher correctly had realized the evaluate level

wonderful by a vision not adequately describable, on his ear fell Mickey's admonition: "Be square!"

He sent one hasty glance toward the gutter. In it stood a sullen-faced newsboy of a size that precluded longer success at paper selling, because public sympathy goes to the little fellows. Before him stood one of these same little fellows, lean, tow-haired, and blue-eyed. clean of face. neat in dress, and with a peculiar modulation in his voice that caught Douglas squarely in the heart. He turned again to the flowers, but as his eyes revelled in beauty, his ears, despite the shuffle of passing feet, and the clamour of cars, lost not one word of what was passing in the gutter, and with each, slow anger surged higher. Mickey, well aware that his first blow would be all the satisfaction coming to him, put the force of his being into his punch, and at the same instant Douglas thrust forth a hand that had pulled for Oxford and was yet in condition.

"Aw, you big stiff!" gasped Jimmy, twisting an astonished neck to see what was happening above and in his rear so surprisingly. Had that little Mickey O'Halloran gone mad to hit him? Mickey standing back, his face upturned, was quite as surprised as Jimmy.

"What did he promise you for selling his papers?" demanded a deep voice.

"Twen—ty-five," answered Mickey, with all the force of inflection in his power. "And if you heard us, Mister, you heard him own up he was owing it."

"I did," answered Douglas Bruce tersely. Then to Jimmy: "Hand him over twenty-five cents."

Jimmy glared upward, but what he saw and the tightng of the hand on his collar were convincing. He
we from his pocket five nickels and dropped them into
coutstretched hand of Douglas, who passed them to
ckey, the soiled fingers of whose left hand closed over
m, while his right snatched off his cap. Fear was on
face, excitement was in his eyes, triumph was in his
ice, and a grin of comradeship curved his lips.

'Many thanks, Boss," he said. "And would you add them by keeping that strangle hold 'til you give me t two seconds the start of him?" He wheeled and

rted through the crowd.

"Mickey!" cried Douglas Bruce. "Mickey, wait!"
But Mickey was half a block away turning into an
ey. The man's grip tightened a twist.

"You'll find Mickey's admonition good," he said. "I vise you to take it. 'Be square!' And two things: first,

"He was imposing on a smaller newsboy. I made him quit," Douglas explained. "That's all."

"Oh!" said the officer, withdrawing his hand. Away sped Jimmy, and with him all chance of identifying Mickey, but Bruce thought he would watch for him. He was such an attractive little fellow.

Mickey raced through the first alley, up another, down a street, across a corner, then paused and looked behind for Jimmy, but Jimmy was not in sight.

"Got him to dodge now," he muttered. "If he ever gets a grip on me he'll hammer me meller! I'm going to have a bulldog if I half starve to buy it. Maybe the pound would give me one. I'll see to-morrow."

He looked long, then started homeward, which meant to jump on a car and ride for miles, then follow streets and alleys again. Finally he entered a last alley that faced due east. A compass could not have pointed more directly toward the rising sun; and there was at least half an hour each clear morning when rickety stairs, wavering fire-escapes, flapping washes, and unkept children were submerged in golden light. Long ago it had been named, and by the time of Mickey's advent Sunrise Alley was as much a part of the map of Multiopolis as Biddle Boulevard, and infinitely more pleasing in name, at least. He began climbing interminable stairs, and at the top of the last flight he unlocked his door and entered his happy home; for Mickey had a home, and it was a happy one. No one else lived in it, and all it contained was his.

Mickey knew three things about his father: he had had

e, he was not square, and he drank himself to death. could not remember his father, but he knew many men gaged in the occupation of his passing, so he well undered why his mother never expressed any regrets.

Vivid in his mind was her face, anxious and pale, but inkling; her body frail and overtaxed, but hitting back at uncomplainingly. Bad things happened, but she exined how they might have been worse; so fed on this sop, I watching her example, Mickey grew like her. The hard he was while she sat over a sewing machine to be with him. hen he grew stout-legged and self-reliant, and could be a after the food, to carry the rent, and to sell papers, then could work by the day, earn more, have better health, I what both brought home paid the rent of the top room ck, of as bad a shamble as a self-respecting city would be the them fed satisfyingly if not nourishingly, and

even written it down lest he forget. It was so simple that only a boy who did not mind his mother could have failed. The formula worked perfectly.

:

Morning: Get up early. Wash your face, brush your clothes. Eat what was left from supper for breakfast. Put your bed to air, and go out with your papers. Don't be afraid to offer them, or to do work of any sort you have strength for; but be deathly afraid to beg, to lie, or to steal, and if you starve, freeze, or die, never, never touch any kind of drink.

Any fellow could do that; Mickey told dozens of them so. He got along so well he could pay the rent each month, dress in whole clothing, have enough to eat, often cooked food on the little gasoline stove, if he were not too tired to cook it, and hide nickels in the old place daily. He had a bed and enough cover; he could get water in the hall at the foot of the last flight of stairs leading to his room for his bath, to scrub the floor, and wash the dishes. From two years on, he had helped his mother with every detail of her housekeeping; he knew exactly what must be done.

It was much more dreadful than he thought it would be to come home alone, and eat supper by himself, but if

sold papers until he was almost asleep where he stood, found he went to sleep as soon as he reached home and I supper, and did not awaken until morning, and then he ald hurry his work and get ahead of the other boys, and ybe sell to their customers. It might be bad to be ne, but always he could remember her, and make her m present by doing every day exactly what she told him, I, after all, being alone was a very wonderful thing comed with having parents who might beat and starve him I take the last penny he earned, not leaving enough to p him from being hungry half the time.

When Mickey looked at some of the other boys, and and many of them talk, he almost forgot the hourly nger for his mother, in thankfulness that he did not have ather and that his mother had been herself. Mickey felt e that if she had been any one of the mothers of most

it were her voice speaking to him. Evening: "Make up your bed." Mickey made his. "Wash any dirty dishes." He had a few so he washed them. "Sweep your floor." He swept. "Always prepare at least one hot thing for supper." He shook the gasoline tank to the little stove. It sounded full enough, so he went to the cupboard his mother had made from a small packing case. There were half a loaf of bread wrapped in its oiled paper, and two bananas discarded by Joe of the fruit stand. He examined his pocket, although he knew perfectly what it contained. Laying back enough to pay for his stock the next day and counting in his twenty-five cents, he had forty cents left. He put thirty in the rent box and started out with ten. Five paid for a bottle of milk, three for cheese, and two for an egg for breakfast.

Then he went home, and at the foot of the fire-escape that he used in preference to the stairs, he met a boy he knew tugging a heavy basket.

"Take an end for a nickel," said the boy.

"Thanks," said Mickey. "It's my time to dine, and 'sides, I been done once to-day."

"If you'll take it, I'll pay first," he offered.

"How far?" questioned Mickey.

"Oh, right over here," said the boy indefinitely.

"Sure!" said Mickey. "Cross my palm with the silver."

The nickel changed hands and Mickey put the cheese and egg in his pocket, the milk in the basket and started. The place where they delivered the wash made Mickey feel quite prosperous. He picked up his milk

ttle and stepped from the door, when a long, low wail at made him shudder, reached his ear.

"What's that?" he asked the woman.

"A stiff was carried past to-day. Mebby they ain't pk the kids yet."

Mickey went slowly down the stairs, his face sober. at was what his mother had feared for him. That was my she had trained him to care for himself, and save the nnies, so that when she was taken away, he still would we a home. Sounded like a child! He was halfway the long flight of stairs before he realized that he was ing. He found the door at last and stood listening, heard long-drawn, heartbreaking moaning. Presently knocked. A child's shriek was the answer. Mickey aightway opened the door. The voice guided him to neap of misery in a corner.

She shook her head: "They took granny in a box and they said they'd come right back and 'get' me. Oh, please, please don't let them!"

"Why they'd be good to you," said Mickey largely. "They'd give you"—he glanced at all the things the room lacked and enumerated—"a clean bed, lots to eat, a window you could be seeing from, a doll, maybe."

"No! No!" she cried. "Granny always said some day she'd go and leave me, and then they'd 'get' me, and she's gone, and the big man said they'd come right back. Oh don't let them! Oh hide me quick!"

"Well—well—! If you're so afraid, why don't you cut and hide yourself then?" he asked.

"My back's bad. I can't walk," the child answered.

"Oh Lord!" said Mickey. "When did you get hurt?"

"It's always been bad. I ain't ever walked," she said.

"Well!" breathed Mickey, aghast. "And knowing she'd have to leave you some day, your granny went and scared you stiff about the Home folks taking you, when it's the only place for you to be going? Talk about women having the sense to vote!"

"I won't go! I won't! I'll scratch them! I'll bite them!" Then in swift change: "Oh boy, don't. Please, please don't let them 'get' me."

Mickey sat on the heap of rags and took both the small bony hands reaching for him. He was so frightened with their hot, tremulous clutch, that he tried to pull away, and so dragged the tiny figure half to light and brought from it moans of pain.

Oh my back! Oh you're hurting me! Oh don't leave

Oh boy, oh dear boy, please don't leave me!"

When she said "Oh dear boy," Mickey heard the voice his mother in an hourly phrase. He pushed the rags in the dreadful little skeleton, crept closer, and gave up the touch of the grimy claws.

'My name's Mickey," he said. "What's yours?"

Peaches," she answered. "Peaches, when I'm good, I crippled brat, when I'm bad."

B'lieve if you had your chance you could look the ches," said Mickey, "but what were you bad for?"

So's she'd hit me," answered Peaches.

'But if me just pulling a little hurt you so, what hapted when she hit you?" asked Mickey.

'Like knives stuck into me," said Peaches.

'Then what did you be bad for?" marvelled Mickey.

to the place 'til you see how nice it is, will you be good and go?"

She burrowed in the cover and screeched again.

"You're just scared past all reason," said Mickey. "You don't know anything. But maybe the Orphings' Homes ain't so good as they look. If they are, what was mother frightened silly about them getting me for? Always she said she just had to live until I got so big they wouldn't 'get' me. And I kept them from getting me by doing what she told me. Wonder if I could keep them from getting you? There's nothing of you. If I could move you there, I bet I could feed you more than your granny did, and I know I could keep you cleaner. You could have my bed, and a window to look from, and clean covers." Mickey was thinking aloud. "Having you to come home to would be lots nicer than nothing, and you'd beat a dog all hollow, 'cause you can talk. If I could get you there, I believe I could be making it. Yes, I believe I could do a lot better than this, and I believe I'd like you, Peaches, you are such a game little kid."

"She could lift me with one hand," she panted. "Oh Mickey, take me! Hurry!"

"Lemme see if I can manage you," said Mickey. "Have you got to be took any particular way?"

"Mickey, ain't you got folks that beat you?" she

"I ain't got folks now," said Mickey, "and they didn't beat me when I had them. I'm all for myself—and if you say so, I guess from now on, I'm for you. Want to go?"

Her arms wound tightly around his neck. Her hot tle face pressed against it.

"Put one arm 'cross my shoulders, an' the other round

legs," she said.

"But I got to go down a lot of stairs, and it's miles and les," said Mickey, "and I ain't got but five cents. I ent it all for grub. Peaches, are you hungry?"

"No!" she said stoutly. "Mickey, hurry!"

"But honest, I can't carry you all that way. I would I could, Peaches, honest I would."

"Oh Mickey, dear Mickey, hurry!" she begged.

"Get down and cover up 'til I think," he ordered. lay you look here! If I tackle this job do you want a ange bad enough to be mean for me?"

"Just a little bit, maybe," said Peaches.

"But I won't hit you," explained Mickey.

She turned from him with a sneering laugh.

"Honest, lady!" said Mickey. "This is how it is: that crying got me and I went Anthony Comstockin'. There's a kid with a lame back all alone up there, half starved and scared fighting wild. We could put her in that basket, she's just a handful, and take her to a place she wants to go. We could ride most of the way on the cars and then a little walk, and get her to a cleaner, better room, where she'd be taken care of, and in an hour you'd be back with enough nickels in your pocket to make a great, big, round, shining, full-moon cartwheel. Dearest lady, doesn't the prospect please you?"

"It would," she said, "if I had the cartwheel now."

"In which case you wouldn't go," said Mickey.
"Dearest lady, it isn't business to pay for undone work."

"And it isn't business to pay your employer's fare to get to your job either," she retorted.

"No, that beats business a mile," said Mickey. "That's an investment. You invest ten cents and an hour's time on a gamble. Now look what you get, lady. A nice restful ride on the cars. Your ten cents back, a whole, big, shining, round, lady-liberty bird, if you trust in God, as the coin says the bird does, and more'n that, dearest lady, you go to bed feeling your pinfeathers sprouting, 'cause you've done a kind deed to a poor crippled orphing."

"If I thought you really had the money—" she said.
"Honest, lady, I got the money," said Mickey, "and 'sides, I got a surprise party for you. When you get back you may go to that room and take every scrap that's in

Now come on; you're going to be enough of a sporting y to try a chance like that, ain't you? May be a gold ne up there, for all I know. Put somethin' soft in the tom of the basket while I fetch the kid."

Mickey ran up the stairs.

'Now Peaches," he said, "I guess I got it fixed. I'm ng to carry you down, and a nice lady is going to put I in a big basket, and we'll take you to the cars and get you to my house; but you got to promise, 'cross Ir heart, you won't squeal, nor say a word, 'cause the ice will 'get' you sure, if you do. They'll think the man is your ma, so it will be all right. See?"

Peaches nodded. Mickey wrapped her in the remnts of a blanket, carried her downstairs and laid her in basket. By turning on her side and drawing up her t, she had more room than she needed. "Hurry!" begged the child.

Down the long stairs they went and to the car line. Crowded car after car whirled past; finally one came not so full, and stopped to let off passengers. Mickey was at the conductor's elbow.

"Please mister, a lame kid," he pleaded. "We want to move her. Please, please help us on."

"Can't!" said the conductor. "Take a taxi."

"Broke my limousine," said Mickey. "Aw come on mister; ain't you got kids of your own?"

"Get out the way!" shouted the conductor.

"Hang on de back wid the basket," cried the woman.

With Peaches laid over her shoulder, she swung to the platform, and took a seat, while Mickey grabbed the basket and ran to the back screaming after her: "I got my fare; only pay for yourself."

Mickey told the conductor to tell the lady where to leave the car, and when she stepped down he was ready with the basket. Peaches, panting and in cold perspiration with pain, was laid in it.

"Lovely part of the village, ain't it, lady?" said Mickey.
"See the castles of the millyingaires piercing the sky; see their automobiles at the curb; see the lovely ladies and sents promenading the streets enjoying the spring?"

Every minute Mickey talked to keep the woman from noticing how far she was going; but he was not so diverting as he hoped to be, for soon she growled: "How many miles furder is it?"

"Just around a corner, and up an alley, and down a

side street a step. Nothing at all! Nice promenade for spry, lovely young lady like you. Evening walk, sm spring in the air. 'Most there now, Peaches."

"Where are ye takin' this kid? How'll I ever get ba

to the car line?" asked the woman.

Mickey ignored the first question. "Why, I'll be eschoing you of course, dearest lady," he said.

At the point of rebellion, Mickey spoke.

"Now set the basket down right here," he ordere "I'll be back in no time with the lady-bird."

He returned in a few minutes and into her outstretch palm he counted twenty-two nickels, picked the ch from the basket, darted around a corner calling, "Ba in a minute," and was gone.

"Now Peaches, we got some steps to climb," he sa:
"Grip my neck tight and stand just a little more."

"Oh!" cried the connected child. "Oh Mickey, how mod!"

"Go slow," said Mickey, "and you better save half to have with some bread for your supper. Now I got to leave you a little bit, but you needn't be afraid, 'cause I'll lock you in and nobody will 'get' you here."

"Now for the cars," said Mickey to his helper.

"What did them folks say?" she asked.

"Tickled all over," answered Mickey promptly.

"That bundle of dirty rags!" she scoffed.

"They are going to throw away the rags and wash her," said Mickey. "She's getting her supper now."

"Sounds like lying," said the woman, "but mebby it ain't. Save me, I can't see why anybody would want a kid at any time, let alone a reekin' bunch of skin and crooked bones."

Mickey. "Sure something that can think and talk back must be a lot more amusing. I see the parks are full of the sich folks dolling up the dogs, feeding them candy and stading them out for an airing in their automobiles; so it's up to the poor people to look after the homeless children, isn't it?"

"Do you know the folks that took her?"

"Sure I do!" said Mickey.

"Do you live close?" she persisted.

"Yes! I'm much obliged for your help, dearest lady, and when you get home, go up to the last attic back, and there is anything there you want, help yourself. Peaches don't need it now, and there's no one else. Thank you and good-bye, and don't fly before your wings grow, 'caus I know you'll feel like trying to-night."

Mickey hurried back to his room. The milk bottle lay on the floor, and the child asleep beside it. The boy gazed at her. There were strange and peculiar stirring in his lonely little heart. She was so grimy he scarcely could tell what she looked like, but the grip of her tiny hot hands was on him. Presently he laughed.

"Well fellers! Look what I've annexed! And I wa hunting a dog! Well, she's lots better. She won't ea much more and she can talk, and she'll be something aliv waiting when I come home. Gee, I'm glad I found her.'

Mickey set the washtub on the floor near the sleeping child, and filling the dishpan with water, put it over the gasoline burner. Then he produced soap, a towel, and comb. He looked at the child again, and going to the "I won't! I won't!" she cried.

"Now looky here!" said Mickey. "I'm the boss of this place. If I say wash, it's wash! See! I ain't going to have a dirty girl with mats in her hair living with me. You begged me and begged me to bring you, now you'll be cleaned up or you'll go back. Which is it, back or soap?"

The child stared at him and then around the room.

"Soap," she conceded.

"That's a lady," said Mickey. "Course it's soap! All clean and sweet smelling like a flower. See my mammy's nice white nightie for you? How bad is your back, Peaches? Can you sit up?"

"Never you mind," said Mickey. "I'll work hard and get a doctor and some day they will."

"They won't ever," insisted Peaches. "Granny carried me to the big doctors once, an' my backbone is weak, an' I won't ever walk, they all said so."

"Poot! Doctors don't know everything," scorned Mickey. "That was long ago, maybe. By the time I can earn enough to get you a dress and shoes, a doctor will come along who's found out how to make backs over. There's one that put different legs on a dog. I read about it in the papers I sold. We'll save our money and get him to put another back on you. Just a bully back."

"Oh Mickey, will you?" she cried.

"Sure!" said Mickey. "Now you sit up and I'll wash you like mammy always did me."

MICHAEL O'HALLORAN

Peaches obeyed. Mickey soaped a cloth, knelt beside ; then he paused.

'Say Peaches, when was your hair combed last?"

'I don't know, Mickey," she answered.

'There's more dirt in it than there is on your face."
'If you got shears, just cut it off," she suggested.

'Sure!" said Mickey.

He produced shears and lifting string after string cut ough all of them the same distance from her head.

'Girls' shouldn't be short, like boys'," he explained. Now hang your head over the edge of the tub and it your eyes and I'll wash it," he ordered.

Mickey soaped and scoured until the last tangle was ne, and then rinsed and partly dried the hair, which t soft and fine to his fingers.

"B'lieve it's going to curl," he said.

'Always did " she answered

Carrel back to buy, there's no frills for Mickey. Seeing what she ain't had, she ought to be thankful for just milk."

So he went back, lifted Peaches from the tub and laid her on the floor, where he dried her with the sheet. Then he put the nightdress over her head, she slipped her arms in the sleeves, and he stretched her on his bed. She was so lost in the garment he tied a string under her arms to hold it, and cut off the sleeves at her elbows. The pieces he saved for washcloths. Mickey spread his sheet over her, rolled the bed before the window where she could have air, see sky and housetops, and brought her supper. It was a cup of milk with half the bread broken in, and a banana. That left the same for him. Peaches was too tired to eat, so she drank the milk, while Mickey finished the remainder. Then he threw her rags from the window, and spread his winter covers on the floor for his bed. Soon both of them were asleep.

CHAPTER II

Moccasins and Lady Slippers

"Tuck this in the toe of your slipper. Three times to-night it was in his eyes and on his tongue, and his slowness let the moment pass; but in nust come soon." Leslie.

O MESSENGER boy for those," said Douglas
Bruce as he handed the florist the price set on
the lady slippers. "Leave them where people
may enjoy them until I call."

As he turned, another man was inquiring about the prchids, and he too preferred the slippers; but when he was

them. In the evening glow of electricity, snapped from their stems, the beautiful basket untouched, the moccasins lay on the breast of a woman of fashion, and with every second of contact with the warmth of her body, drooped lower, until clasped in the arms of her lover, they were quite crushed, and so flung from an automobile to be ground to pulp by passing wheels.

The slippers had a happier fate. Douglas Bruce carried them reverently. He was sure he knew the swamp in which they grew. As he went his way, he held the basket, velvet-white, in strong hands, and swayed his body with the motion of the car lest one leaf be damaged. When he entered the hall, down the stairs came Leslie Winton.

"Why Douglas, I wasn't expecting you," she said.

Douglas Bruce held up the basket.

"Joy!" she cried. "Oh joy unspeakable! Who has been to the tamarack swamp?"

"A squaw was leaving Lowry's just as he put these in his window," answered Douglas.

"Bring them," she said.

He followed to a wide side veranda, set the basket on a table in a cool spot and drew a chair near it. Leslie Winton seated herself, leaned on the table, and studied toe orchids. Unconsciously she made the picture Douglas had seen. She reached up slim fingers in delicate touchings here and there of moss, corolla and slipper.

"Never in all my days—" she said. "Never in all my days— I shall keep the basket always, and the slippers as long as I possibly can. See this one! It isn't

fully open. I should have them for a week at leas Please hand me a glass of water."

Douglas started to say that ice water would be to cold, but with the wisdom of a wise man waited; an as always, was joyed by the waiting. For the girl too the glass and cupping her hands around it sat talking the flowers, and to him, as she warmed the water witheat from her body. Douglas was so delighted with the unforeseen second that had given him first chance at the orchids, and so this unexpected call, that he did not min the attention she gave the flowers. He had reasons for not being extravagant; but seldom had a like sur brought such returns.

He began drawing interest as he watched Leslie. Never had her form seemed so perfect, her dress so becoming ar simple. How could other women make a vulgar displa

he saw her do things that no amount of culture could instil. Instinct and tact are inborn; careful rearing may produce a good imitation, they are genuine only with blood. Leslie had always filled his ideal of a true woman. To ignore him for his gift would have piqued many a man; Douglas Bruce was pleased.

"You wonders!" she said softly. "Oh you wonders! When the mists lifted in the marshes this morning, and the first ray of gold touched you to equal goldness, you didn't know you were coming to me. I almost wish I could put you back. Just now you should be in such cool mistiness and you should be hearing a hermit thrush sing vespers, a cedar bird call, and a whip-poor-will cry. But I'm glad I have you! Oh I'm so glad you came to me! I never materialized a whole swamp with such vividness as only this little part of it brings. Douglas, when you caught the first glimpse of these, how far into the swamp did you see past them?"

"To the heart-of the swamp-and of my heart."

"I can see it as perfectly as I ever did," she said. "But I eliminate the squaw; possibly because I didn't see her. And however exquisite the basket is, she broke the law when she peeled a birch tree. I'll wager she brought this to Lowry, carefully covered. And I'm not sure but there should have been a law she broke when she uprooted these orchids. Much as I love them, I doubt if I can keep them alive, and bring them to bloom next season. I'll try, but I don't possess flower magic in the highest degree."

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She turned the glass and touched it with questioning alm. Was it near the warmth of bog water? After l, was bog water warm? Next time she was in a vamp she would plunge her hand deeply in the mosses nd feel the exact temperature to which those roots had en accustomed. Then she spoke again.

"Yes, Douglas, I eliminate the squaw," she said. "These olden slippers are the swamp to me, but I see you kneeling lift them. I am so glad I'm the woman they made you e."

Douglas sat forward and opened his lips. Was not this e auspicious moment?

"Did the squaw bring more?" she questioned.

"Yes," he answered. "Pink moccasins in a basket of d osiers, with the same moss, and rosemary and white esses. Would you rather those?"

"I saw the man who ordered them," laughed Douglas.

"Oh!" cried Leslie, comprehendingly.

"I'd stake all I'm worth the moccasins are drooping against a lavender dress; the roots are in the garbage can, and the cook or maid has the basket," he said.

"Douglas, how can you!" exclaimed Leslie.

"I couldn't! Positively couldn't! Mine are here!"

The slow colour crept into her cheek. "I'll make those roots bloom next spring, and you shall see them in perfection," she promised.

"That would be wonderful!" he exclaimed warmly.

"Tell me, were there yet others?" she asked hastily.

"Only these," he said. "But there was something else. I came within a second of losing them. While I debated, or rather while I possessed these, and worshipped before the others, there was a gutter row that almost made me lose yours."

"In the gutter again?" she laughed.

"Once again," he admitted. "Such a little chap, with an appealing voice, and his inflection was the smallest part of what he was saying. 'Aw kid, come on. Be square!' Oh Leslie!"

"Why Douglas!" the girl cried. "Tell me!"

"Of all the wooden-head slowness!" he exclaimed. "I've let him slip again!"

"Let who 'slip again?" questioned Leslie.

"My little brother!" answered Douglas.

"Oh Douglas! You didn't really?" she protested.

"Yes I did," he said. "I heard a little lad saying the

hings that are in the blood and bone of the men money an't buy and corruption can't break. I heard him plead ke a lawyer and argue his case straight. I lent a hand then his eloquence failed, got him his deserts, and let im go! I did have an impulse to keep him. I did call fter him. But he disappeared."

"Douglas, we can find him!" she comforted.

"I haven't found either of the others I realized I'd ave been interested in, after I let them slip," he anwered, "and this boy was both of them rolled into one, and ten more like them."

"Oh Douglas! I'm so sorry! But maybe some other han has already found him," said Leslie.

"No. You can always pick the brothered boys," said Douglas. "The first thing that happens to them is a lean-up and better clothing; and an air of possessed importance. No man has attached this little follow."

unto God' when she did it. The big fellow had loafed all afternoon and when Mickey came back and turned over the money, and waited to be paid off, his employer laughed at the boy for not keeping it when he had it. Mickey begged him 'to be square' and told him that 'was not business'—'not business,' mind you, and the big fellow jeered at him and was starting away. Mickey and I reached him at the same time; so I got in the gutter again, and I also let the rarest boy I ever saw escape me. I don't see how I can be so slow! I don't see how I did it!"

"I don't either," she said, with a twinkle that might have referred to the first of the two exclamations. "It must be your Scotch habit of going slowly and surely. But cheer up! We'll find him. I'll help you."

"Have you reflected on the fact that this city covers many square miles, of which a fourth is outskirts, and from them three thousand newsboys gathered at the last Salvation Army banquet for them?"

"That's where we can find him!" she cried. "Thanks-giving, or Christmas! Of course we'll see him then."

"Mickey didn't have a Salvation Army face," he said.
"I am sure he is a free lance, and a rare one; besides, this is May. I want my little brother to go on my vacation with me. I want him now."

"Would it help any if I'd be a sister to you?"

"Not a bit," said Douglas. "I don't in the very least wish to consider you in the light of a sister; you have another place in my heart, very different, and all your own; but I do wish to make of Mickey the little brother I never

have had. Minturn was telling me what a rejuvenation he's getting from the boy he picked up. Already he has him in his office, and is planning school and partnership with a man he can train as he chooses."

"But Minturn has sons of his own!" protested Leslie.

"Oh no! Not in the least!" exclaimed Douglas. "Min turn has sons of his wife's, and she persistently upsets and frustrates Minturn's every idea for them, and he is help-less. You will remember she has millions; he has what he earns. He can't separate his boys, splendid physical little chaps, from their mother's money and influence, and educate them to be a help to him. They are to be mad into men of wealth and leisure. Minturn will evolve his little brother into a man of brains and efficiency."

"But Minturn is a power!" cried the girl.

"Not financially," explained Douglas. "Nothing bu

had who would be company for me, when I can't be here and don't wish to be with other men."

"Are you still going to those Brotherhood meetings?"

"I am. And I always shall be. Nothing in life gives me such big returns for the time invested. There is a world of talk breaking loose about the present 'unrest' among women; I happen to know that the 'unrest' is as deep with men. For each woman I personally know, bitten by 'unrest,' I know two men in the same condition. As long as men and women are forced to combine, to uphold society, it is my idea that it would be a good thing if there were to be a Sisterhood organized, and then the two societies frankly brought together and allowed to clear up the differences between them."

"But why not?" asked the girl eagerly.

"Because we are pursuing false ideals, and have a wrong conception of what is worth while in life," answered the Scotsman. "Because the sexes except in rare, very rare, instances, do not understand each other, and every day are drifting farther apart, and most of the married folk I know are farthest apart of all. Leslie, what is it in marriage that constrains people? We can talk and argue and agree or disagree on anything, why can't the Minturns?"

"From what you say, it would seem to me it's her idea of what is worth while in life," said Leslie.

"Exactly!" cried Douglas. "But he can sway men! He can do powerful work. He could induce her to marry him. Why can't he control his own blood?"

"If she should lose her money and become dependen on him for support, he could!" said Leslie.

"He should do it anyway," insisted Douglas.

"Do you think you could?" she queried.

"I never thought myself in his place," said Douglas "but I believe I will, and if I see glimmerings, I'll sugges them to him."

"Good boy!" said the girl lightly. And then she added "Do you mind if I think myself in her place and see if can suggest a possible point at which she could be reached I know her. I shouldn't consider her happy. At leas not with what I call joy."

"What do you call joy?" asked Douglas.

"Being satisfied with your environment."

Douglas glanced at her, then at her surroundings, and looking into her eyes laughed quizzically.

Mr. Winton seated himself and began examining and turning the basket. "Indians?" he queried.

"Yes," said Douglas. "A particularly greasy squaw. I wish I might truthfully report an artist's Indian of the Minnehaha type, but alack, it was the same one I've seen ever since I've been in the city, and that you've seen for years before my arrival."

Mr. Winton still turned the basket.

"I've bought their stuff for years, because neither Leslie nor her mother ever would tolerate fat carnations and overgrown roses so long as I could find a scrap of arbutus, a violet or a wake-robin from the woods. We've often motored up and penetrated the swamp I fancy these came from, for some distance, but later in the season; it's so very boggy now. Aren't these rather wonderful?" He turned to his daughter.

"Perfectly, Daddy," she said. "Perfectly!"

"But I don't mean for the Creator," explained Mr. Winton. "I am accustomed to His miracles. Every day I see a number of them. I mean for the squaw."

"I'd have to know the squaw and understand her view-Point," said Leslie.

"She had it in her tightly clenched fist," laughed Douglas. "One, I'm sure; anyway, not over two."

"That hasn't a thing to do with the art with which she made the basket and filled it with just three perfect plants," said Leslie.

"You think there is real art in her anatomy?" queried Mr. Winton.

"Bear witness, O you treasures of gold!" cried L waving toward the basket.

"There was another," explained Douglas as he : described the osier basket.

Mr. Winton nodded. He looked at his daughter.

"I like to think, young woman, that you were with and I have cultivated what might be called ar taste in you," he said. "Granted the freedom of the arack swamp, could you have done better?"

"Not so well, Daddy! Not nearly so well. I r could have defaced what you can see was a noble big by cutting that piece of bark, and I might have worshi until dragged away, but so far as art and I are concer the slippers would still be under their tamarack."

"You are begging the question, Leslie," laughed father. "I was not discussing the preservation of slippers, and when it comes to putting my girl, and incidentally my whole family, in competition with an Indian squaw on a question of art, naturally, her father and one of her best friends would want to be present."

"But maybe 'Minnie' went alone, and what chance would her work have with you two for judges?" asked Leslie.

"We needn't be the judges," said Douglas Bruce quietly. "We can put this basket in the basement in the coolest, dampest place, and it will keep perfectly for a week. When you make your basket we can find the squaw and bring her down with us. Lowry could display the results side by side. He could call up whomever you consider the most artistic man and woman in the city and get their decision. You'd be willing to abide by that, wouldn't you?"

"Surely, but it wouldn't be fair to the squaw," explained Leslie. "I'd have had the benefit of her art to begin on."

"It would," said Mr. Winton. "Does not every artist living, painter, sculptor, writer, what you will, have the benefit of all art that has gone before?"

"You agree?" Leslie turned to Douglas.

"Your father's argument is a truism."

"But I will know that I am on trial. She didn't. Is it fair to her?" persisted Leslie.

"For begging the question, commend me to a woman," said Mr. Winton. "The point we began at, was not what you could do in a contest with her. She went to the swamp and brought from it some flower baskets. It is quite fair to her to suppose that they are her best art.

Now what we are proposing to test is whether the fin product of our civilization, as embodied in you, can go the same swamp, and from the same source of supp surpass her work. Do I make myself clear?"

"Perfectly clear, Daddy, and it would be fair," coceded Leslie. "But it is an offence punishable with heavy fine to peel a birch tree; and I wouldn't do it it were not."

"Got her to respect the law anyway," said Mr. Winto Douglas. "The proposition, Leslie, was not that y do the same thing, but that from the same source youtdo her. You needn't use birch bark if it involves yo law-abiding soul."

"Then it's all settled. You must hurry and take before the lovely plants have flowered," said Leslie.

"I'll go day after to-morrow, if it is a possible thin



am interested, excited and eager to make the test, yet in a sense I do not like it."

"But why?" asked Douglas.

"Can't you see?" countered Leslie.

"No," said Douglas.

"It's shifting my sense of possession," explained the girl.
"The slippers are no longer my beautiful gift from you. They are perishable things that belong to an Indian squaw, and in justice to her, I have to keep them in perfect condition so that my work may not surpass hers with the unspeakable art of flower freshness; and instead of thinking them the loveliest thing in the world, I will now lie awake half the night, no doubt, studying what I can possibly find that is more beautiful."

Douglas Bruce opened his slow lips and took a step in her direction.

"Dinner is served," announced her father. He looked inquiringly toward his daughter. She turned to Douglas.

"Unless you have a previous engagement, you will dine with us, won't you?" she asked.

"I should be delighted," he said heartily.

When the meal was over and they had returned to the veranda, Leslie listened quietly while the men talked, most of the time, but when she did speak, what she said proved that she always had listened to and taken part in the discussions of men, until she understood and could speak of business or politics intelligently.

"Have you ever considered an official position, Douglas?" inquired Mr. Winton. "I have an office within my gift, or so nearly so that I can control it, and seems to me that you would be a good man. Surely could work together in harmony."

"It never has appealed to me that I wanted work of the nature," answered Douglas. "It's unusually kind of y to think of me, and make the offer, but I am satisfied what I am doing, and there is a steady increase in my bu ness that gives me confidence."

"What's your objection to office?" asked Mr. Winto "That it takes your time from your work," answer Douglas. "That it changes the nature of your work that if you let the leaders of a party secure you a noming tion, and the party elect you, you are bound to the principles, at least there is a tacit understanding that y are, and if you should happen to be afflicted with princip of your own, then you have got to sacrifice them."

kind of business I would care to handle. I am thinking of practising corporation law; I specialized in that, so I may have the pleasure before so very long of going after some of the men who do what you so aptly term the 'dirty' jobs."

"A repetition of the customary chorus," said Mr. Winton, "differing only in that it is a little more emphatic than usual. I predict that you will become an office-holder, having party affiliations, inside ten years."

"Possibly," said Douglas. "But I'll promise you this: it will be a new office no man ever before has held, in the gift of a party not now in existence."

"Oh you dreamers!" cried Mr. Winton. "What a wonderful thing it is to be young and setting out to reform the world, especially on a permanent income. That's where you surpass most reformers."

"But I said nothing about reform," corrected Douglas.
"I said I was thinking of corporation law."

"I'm accustomed to it; and you wouldn't scare Leslie if you said 'reform,'" remarked Mr. Winton. "She's a reformer herself, you know."

"But only sweat-shops, child labour, civic improvement, preservation of the wild, and things like that!" cried Leslie quickly and eagerly, that both men laughed.

"God be praised!" exclaimed her father.

"God be fervently praised!" echoed her lover.

Before she retired Leslie visited the slippers.

"I'd like to know," she said softly, as she touched a bronze striped calyx, "I'd like to know how I am to penetrate your location, and find and fashion anything to outdo

you and the squaw, you wood creatures you!" Then sl bent above the flowers and whispered: "Tuck this in the toe of your slipper! Three times to-night it was in he eyes, and on his tongue, and his slowness let the mome pass; but it must come soon. I can 'bide a wee' for no Scots mannie, dear Lord, I can bide forever, if I must for it's he only, and no other, world without end. Amen

The moccasins soon had been ground to pulp and caried away on a non-skid tire and at three o'clock in t morning a cross, dishevelled society woman, in passi from her dressing room to her bed, stumbled over the osi basket and it was kicked from her way.

CHAPTER III

S. O. S.

"Next time I yell for help, I won't ask to have anybody sent. I'll ask Him to help me save our souls, myself." Mickey.

ICKEY, his responsibility weighing upon him, slept lightly and awakened early, his first thought of Peaches. He slipped into his clothing and advancing peered at her through the grayness. His heart beat wildly.

"Aw you poor kid! You poor little kid!" he whispered to himself as he had fallen into the habit of doing for company. "The scaring, and the jolting, and the scouring, and everything were too much for you. You've gone sure! You're just like them at the morgue. Aw Peaches! I didn't mean to hurt you, Peaches! I was trying to be good to you. Honest I was, Peaches! Aw——!"

As his fright increased Mickey raised his voice until his last wail reached the consciousness of the sleeping child. She stirred slightly and her head moved on the pillow. Mickey almost fell, so great was his relief. He stepped closer, gazing in awe. The sheared hair had dried in the night and tumbled into a hundred golden ringlets. The tiny clean face was white, so white that the blue of the

closed eyes showed darkly through the lids, and the ble veins streaked the temples and the little claws lying laxed on the sheet. Mickey slowly broke up inside. big, hard lump grew in his throat. He shut his lips tig and bored the tears from his eyes with his wiry fists. began to mutter his thoughts to ease his heart and reg self-control.

mobiles! Nor nothing! Not nothing you could mention at all! Not eating! Nor seeing! Nor having! Not no single thing—nothing at all—Lily!

"Lily!" he repeated. "Little snow white lily! Peaches is a good name for you if you're referring to sweetness, but it doesn't fit for colour. Least I never saw none white. Lily fits you better. If you'd been a dog, I was going to name you Partner. But you're mine just as much as if you was a dog, so I'll name you if I want to. Lily! That's what God made you; that's what I'm going to call you."

The God thought, evoked by creation, remained in Mickey's heart. He glanced at the sky clearing from the graying mists of morning, while the rumble of the streets came up to him in a dull roar.

"O God, I guess I been forgetting my praying some, since mother went. I'd nothing but myself and I ain't worth bothering You about. But O God, if You are going to do any big things to-day, why not do some for Lily? Can't be many that needs it more. If You saw her yesterday, You must see if You'll look down now, that she's better off, she's worlds better off. Wonder if You sent me to get her, so she would be better off. Gee, why didn't You send one of them millyingaires who could a-dressed her up, and fed her and took her to the country where the sun would shine on her. Ain't never touched her, I bet a liberty-bird. But if You did the sending, You sent just me, so she's my job, an I'll do her! But I wish You'd help me, or send me help, O God. It's an awful job to tackle all alone, and I'm going to be scared

stiff if she gets sick. I can tell by how I felt when thought she was gone. So if You sent me God, it's up You to help me. Come on now! If You see the sparror when they fall, You jest good naturedly ought to see Li Peaches, 'cause she's always been down, and she can't ev get up, unless we can help her. Help me all You can God, and send me help to help her all I can, 'cause she cause all the help she can get, and then some! Amen!"

Mickey took one of Peaches' hands in his.

"I ain't the time now, but to-night I got to cut yo nails and clean them, and then I guess you'll do to sta on," he said as he squeezed the hand. "Lily! Li Peaches, wake up! It's morning now. I got to go o with the papers to earn supper to-night. Wake up! must wash you and feed you 'fore I go."

Peaches opened her eyes, and drew back startled.

Peaches, every single kid in the Park is named two names, these days. Fellow can't have a foot race for falling over Mary Elizabeths, and Louisa Ellens. I can't do so much just to start on, 'cause I can't earn the boodle; but fast as Iget it, you're going to line up; but nachally, just at starting you must begin on the things that are not expensive. Now names don't cost anything, so I can be giving you six if I like, and you are a lily, so right now I'm naming you Lily, but two's the style; keep your Peaches, if it suits you. Lily just flies out of my mouth when I look at you."

This was wonderful. No cursing! No beating! No wailing over a lame-back brat to feed. Mickey liked to give her breakfast! Mickey named her for the wonderful flower like granny had picked up before a church one day, a few weeks ago and in a rare sober moment had carried to her. Mickey had made her feel clean, so rested, and so fresh she wanted to roll over the bed. With child impulse she put up her arms. Mickey stooped to them.

"You goin' to have two names too," she said. "You gotter be fash'nable. I ist love you for everythin', washin', an' breakfast, an' the bed, an' winder, an' off the floor; oh I just love you sick for the winder, an' off the floor. You going to be"—she paused in a deep study to think of a word anywhere nearly adequate, and ended in a burst that was her best emanation—"lovest! Mickey-lovest!"

She hugged him closely, then lifted her chin and pursed her lips. Mickey pulled back, a dull colour in his face.

"Now nix on the mushing!" he said. "I'll stand for a hug once a day, but nix on the smear!"

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"You'd let a dog," she whimpered. "I ain't kissed othin' since granny sold the doll a lady gave me the time we went to the doctor's, an' took the money to get drunk n, an' beat me more'n I needed for a change, 'cause I ried for it. I think you might!"

"Aw well, go on then, if you're going to bawl," said lickey, "but put it there!"

He stepped as far back as he could, leaned over, and wept the hair from his forehead, which he stiffly brought a range of her lips. He had to brace himself to keep rom flinching at their cold touch and straightened in elief.

"Now that's over!" he said briskly. "I'll wash you, nd get your breakfast."

"You do a lot of washin', don't you?" inquired Peaches.

"You want the sleep out of your eyes," coaxed Mickey.

said. "I guess jerkin' ain't going to help your back any. I think we better be easy with it 'til we lay up the money to Carrel it. He put different legs on a dog, course he can put a new back on you."

"Dogs doesn't count only with rich folks 'at rides 'em, an' feeds 'em cake; but where'll you find 'nother girl 'at ull spare her back for me, Mickey-lovest?" asked Peaches.

"Gee, Lily!" he cried. "I didn't think of that—I wish I hadn't promised you. Course he could change the backs, but where'd I get one. I'll just have to let him take mine."

"I don't want no boy's back!" flashed Peaches. "I won't go out an' sell papers, an' wash you, an' feed you, an' let you stay here in this nice bed. I don't want no new back, grand like it is here. I won't have no dog's back, even. I won't have no back!"

"Course I couldn't let you work and take care of me, Lily," he said. "Course I couldn't! I was just thinking what I could do. I'll write a letter and ask the Carrel man if a dog's back would do. I could get one your size at the pound, maybe."

Peaches arose at him with hands set like claws.

"You fool!" she shrieked. "You big damn fool! 'A dog's back!' I won't! You try it an' I'll scratch your eyes out! You stop right now on backs an' go hell-bent an' get my breakfast! I'm hungry! I like my back! I will have it! You—"

Mickey snatched his pillow from the floor and used it to press the child against hers. Then he slipped it down a trifle at one corner and spoke:

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"Now you cut that out, Miss Chicken, right off!" he id sternly. "I wouldn't take no tantrums from a dog, d I won't from you. You'll make your back worse actglike that, than beating would make it, and 'sides, if u're going to live with me, you must be a lady, and no by says such words as you used, and neither does no genman, 'cause I don't myself. Now you'll either say, Iickey, please get me my breakfast,' and I'll get you one th a big surprise, or you'll lay here alone and hungry 'til ome back to-night. And it'll be a whole day, see?"

"'FI wasn't a pore crippled kid, you wouldn't say that

me," she wailed.

"And if you wasn't 'a poor crippled kid,' you wouldn't y swearin's to me," said Mickey, "'cause you know I'd k the stuffin' out of you, and if you could see yourself, u'd know that you need stuffin' in, more than you need it t. I'm 'mazed at you! Forget that you ever heard ch stuff, and be a nice lady, won't you? My time's tting short and I got to go, or the other kids will sell my paper men, and we'll have no supper. Now you



"Now you cut that out, Miss Chicken, right off!"
said Mickey. "I wouldn't take no tantrums from a
dog, and I won't from you"



laid the pillow on the foot of the bed and said po: "'Scuse me, Lily, till I get me a bottle of milk."
on he returned and with his first glimpse of the bed
aghast. It was empty. His eyes searched the room.
allet on the floor outlined a tiny form. A dismayed
mile flashed over his face. He took a step toward
and then turned, getting out a cloth he had not used
being alone. Near the bed he set the table, covered
d laid a plate, knife, fork and spoon. Because he was
ning Peaches he soon discovered she was peeking out
m, so he paid strict attention to the burner he was
ng.

en he sliced bread and put on a toaster, set the milk ie table, broke an egg in a saucer, and turned the . Soon the odours filled the room, also a pitiful l. Mickey knew Peaches must have hurt herself g from the bed, although her arms were strong for emainder of her body. She had no way to reach his but to roll across the floor. She might have bruised lf badly. He was amazed, disgusted, yet compaste. He went to her and turned back the com-

ou must be speaking a little louder, Lily," he said y. "I wasn't quite hearing you." ly muffled sobbing. Mickey dropped the cover. want my breakfast," said a very small voice. ou mean, 'Mickey, please get my breakfast,' Flow-zirl," he corrected gently. h I hurt myself so!" Peaches wailed. "Oh Mickey.

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fell an' broke my back clear in two. 'Tain't like rollin' f my rags; oh Mickey, it's so far to the floor, from your ed! Oh Mickey, even another girl's back, or yours, or a og's, or anybody's wouldn't fix it now. It'll hurt for ays. Mickey, why did I ever? Oh what made me? Iickey-lovest, please, please put me back on the nice fine ed, an' do please give me some of that bread."

Mickey lifted her, crooning incoherent things. He iped her face and hands, combed her hair, and pushed the able against the bed. He broke toast in a glass and oured milk over it. Then he cooked the egg and gave her hat, keeping only half the milk and one slice of bread. It made a sandwich of more bread, and the cheese, put a anana with it, set a cup of water in reach, and told her hat was her lunch; to eat it when the noon whistles blew. Then he laid all the picture books he had on the back of the bed, but the money for his papers in his pocket, and

act like that! I thought she'd keep on being like she woke up. I never behaved like that." en in swift remorse: "But I had the finest mother a r ever had to tell me, and she ain't had any one, and rot me now, so I'll have to tell her; and course I can't verything at once. So far as that goes, she didn't y worse than the millyingaires' kids in the park who nemselves in the dirt, and bump their own heads, and m and fight. I guess my kid's no worse than other e's. I can train her like mother did me, and then be enough alike we can live together, and even when 7as the worst, I liked her. I liked her cartloads." Mickey shouldered the duties of paternity, and began ing for his child, his little, neglected, bad, sick child. ways had had nimble wits and feet; that day he exl himself. Anxiety as to how much he must carry at night to replace what he had spent in moving nes to his room, three extra meals to provide before prrow night, something to interest her through the day; it was a contract, surely! Mickey faced it lv. but he did not flinch. He did not know how s to be done, but he did know it must be done. " her they should not. Whatever it had been his er had feared for him, nameless though the horror from that he must save Lilv. Mickey always had tht it must be careless nurses or lack of love. Yesy's papers had said there were some children at one : Homes, no one ever visited; they were sick for love;

I not some kind people come to see them? It must

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we been that she feared. He could not possibly know it is the stigma of having been a charity child she had been inbating with all her power.

They had not "got" him; they must not "get" his Lily; t stirrings in Mickey's brain told him he was not going be sufficient, alone. There were emergencies he did not ow how to manage. He must have help. Mickey relved the problem in his worried head without reaches a solution. His necessity drove him. He darted, dged and took chances. Far down the street he ected his victim and studied his method of assault he approached; for Mickey did victimize people that y. He sold them papers when they did not want them. It is bettered that and sold them papers when they had em. He snatched up discarded papers, smoothed and d them over. Every gay picture or broken toy dropped an an automobile he caught up and pocketed for her

"Thanks!" said Mickey. "My shoulder is worth considerable to me; but nothing like that to you, lady!"

"Well!" she said. "Are you refusing the money?"

"Sure!" said Mickey. "I ain't a beggar! Just a balance on my shoulder and picking up your purse ain't worth an endowment. I'll take five cents each for three soiled papers, if you say so."

"You amazing boy!" said the woman. "Don't you understand that if you hadn't offered your shoulder, I might now be lying senseless? You saved me a hard fall, and my dress would have been ruined. You step over here a minute. What's your name?"

"Michael O'Halloran," was the answer.

"Where do you live?" came the next question.

"Sunrise Alley. It's miles on the cars, then some more walking," explained Mickey.

"Whom do you live with?" came next.

"Myself," said Mickey.

"Alone?" was the astonished query.

"All but Peaches," said Mickey. "Lily Peaches."

"Who is Lily Peaches?" pursued the woman.

"She's about so long"—Mickey showed how long—
"and about so wide"—he showed how wide—"and white
like Easter church flowers, and her back's bad, and I'm
her governor; she's my child."

"If you won't take the money for yourself, then take it for her," offered the woman. "If you have a little sick girl to support, you surely can use it."

"Umm!" said Mickey. "You kind of ball a fellow up

and hang him on the ropes. Honest you do, lady! I can take care of myself. I know I can, 'cause I've done it three years, but I don't know how I'm goin' to make it with Lily, for she needs a lot, and she may get sick any day, and I ain't sure how I'm going to manage well with her."

"How long have you taken care of her?"

"Since last night," explained Mickey.

"Oh! How old is she?" Questions seemed endless.

"I don't know," answered Mickey. "Her granny died and left her lying on rags in a garret, and I found her screeching, so I took her to my castle and washed her, and fed her, and you should see her now."

"I believe I should!" said the woman. "Let's go at once. You know Michael, you can't care for a girl. I'll put her in one of the beautiful Children's Homes—"

"Now niv on the Children's Homes fair ladel" h

grand, she'd wanted me there. Nix on the Orphings' Home talk. Lily ain't going to be raised in droves, nor focks, nor herds! See? Lily's going to have a home of her own, and a man to work for her, and to love her alone."

Mickey backed away swallowing a big lump in his throat, and blinking down angry tears in his eyes.

"'Smorning," he said, "I asked God to help me, and for a minute I was so glad, 'cause I thought He'd helped by sending you, and you could tell me how to do; but if God can't beat you, I can get along by myself."

"You can't take care of a girl by yourself," she insisted.
"The two won't allow you."

"Oh can't I?" scoffed Mickey. "Well you're mistaken, 'cause I am! And getting along bully! You ought to seen her last night, and then this morning. Next time I yell for help, I won't ask to have anybody sent, I'll ask Him to help me save our souls, myself. Ever see that big, white, wonderful Jesus at the Cathedral door, ma'am, holding the little child in His arms so loving? I don't s'pose He stopped to ask whether it was a girl, or a boy, 'fore He took it up; He just opened his arms to the first child that meded Him. And if I remember right, He didn't say, 'Suffer little children to be sent to Orphings' Homes.' Mammy never read it to me that way. It was suffer them to come to 'Me,' and be took up, and held tender. See? Nix on the Orphings' Home people. They ain't in my dass. Beaucheous lady, adoo! Farewell! I depart!" Mickey wheeled and vanished. It was a wonderful exhibition of curves, leaps, and darts. He paused for breat when he felt safe.

"So that's the dope!" he marvelled. "I can't tak care of a girl? Going to take her away from me? I'd lik to know why? Men all the time take care of women, an I see boys taking care of girls I know their mothers le with them, every day—I'd like to know why. Mothe said I was to take care of her. She said that's what me were made for. 'Cause he didn't take care of her, was wh she was glad my father was dead. I guess I know what I'd doing! But I've learned something! Nix on the eas talk after this; and telling anybody you meet all you know Shut mouth from now on. 'What's your name, litt boy?' 'Andrew Carnegie.' 'Where d'you live?' 'Cat tle on the Hudson!' A mouth just tight shut about Lily after this! And nix on the Swell Dames! Next one cat have been asset for all I care! I won't touch hea!"

running. He stood waiting for his papers. He was rather sick, yet he remembered he had five there he must sell before night.

"Better clear out of here now!" suggested a surgeon.

"My papers!" said Mickey. "She fell right cross my feet, and I slid them under, to make her head more pillow-like on the stones. Maybe I can sell some of them."

The surgeon motioned to a nurse at the door.

"Take this youngster to the office and pay him for the papers he has spoiled," he ordered.

"Will she—is she going to——?" wavered Mickey.

"I'm not sure," said the surgeon. "From the bleeding probably concussion; but she will live. Do you know how she came to fall?"

"There was a smear of something on the steps she didn't see," explained Mickey.

The surgeon muttered things about visitors smuggling fruit to the patients which Mickey felt were justified.

"Thank you! Go with the nurse," said the surgeon. Then to an attendant: "Take Miss Alden's number, and see to her case. She was going after something."

Mickey turned back. "Paper, maybe," he suggested, pointing to her closed hand. The surgeon opened it and found a nickel. He handed it to Mickey. "If you have a clean one left, let this nurse take it to Miss Alden's case, and say she has been assigned other duty. See to sending a substitute at once."

He was running skilled fingers over the unconscious head as he talked. Every paper proved to be marked.

"I can bring you a fresh one in a second, lady," offere Mickey. "I got the money."

"All right," she said. "Wait with it in the office at

then I'll pay you."

"I'm sent for a paper and I'm to be let in as soon as get it," announced Mickey to the porter. "I ain't takin chances of being turned down," he said to himself, as I stopped a second to clean the step.

Soon he returned and was waiting when the nurse cam She was young and fair faced; her hair was golden, and she paid Mickey for his papers he wondered how soon I could have Lily looking like her. He took one long surve as he pocketed the money, thinking he would rush home once; but he wanted to fix in his mind how Lily must a pear, to be right, for he thought a nurse in the hospit would be right. Peaches, so he smiled again, and then he asked: "Are you in such an awful hurry?"

"I think we owe you more than merely paying for your papers," she said. "What is it?"

Again Mickey showed how long and how wide Lily was. "And with hair like yours, and eyes and cheeks that would be, if she had her chance, and nobody to give her that chance but just me," he said. "Me and Lily are all each other's got," he explained hastily. "We're home folks. We're a family. We don't want no bunching in corps and squads. We're nix on the Orphings' Home business; but you must know, ma'am—would you, oh would you tell me just how I should be taking care of her? I'm doing everything like my mother did to me; but I was well and strong. Maybe Lily, being a girl, should have things different. A-body so beautiful as you, would tell me, wouldn't you?"

Then a miracle happened. The nurse, so clean she smelled like a drug store, so lovely she shone as a sunrise, laid an arm across Mickey's shoulders. "You come with me," she said. She went to a little room, and all alone she asked Mickey questions; with his eyes straight on hers, he answered, and she told him surely he could take care of Lily. She explained how. She rang for a basket and packed it full of things he must have, and showed him how to use them, and she told him to come each Saturday at four o'clock, just as she was going off duty, and tell her how he was getting along. She gave him a thermometer, and told him how to learn if the child had fever. She told him about food, and she put in an ointment, and in-

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ucted him to rub the little back with it, so the bed uld not be so tiresome. She showed him how to arrange e pillows, and when he left, the tears were rolling down ickey's cheeks. Both of them were so touched she laid r arm across his shoulder again and went as far as the vator, and a passport to her at any time was in his cket.

"I 'spect other folks tell you you are beautiful like wers, or music, or colours," said Mickey in farewell, ut you look just like a window in Heaven to me, and I is see right through you to God and all the beautiful gels; but what gets me is why the other one had to bust crust, to make you come true!"

The nurse was laughing and wiping her eyes at the same ne. Mickey gripped the basket until his hands were stiff he sped homeward at least two hours early and happy out it. At the last grocery he remembered every word.

"Mickey, hurry!" she cried. "Mickey, lemme hold you 'til I'm sure! Mickey, all day I didn't hardly durstill breathe, fear the door'd open an' they'd 'get' me. Oh Mickey, you won't let them, will you?"

Mickey dropped his bundles and ran to the bed and this time he did not shrink from her wavering clasp. It was delight to come home to something alive, something that belonged to him, something to share with, something to work and think for, something that depended upon him.

"Now nix on the scare talk," he comforted. "Forget it! I've fixed here three years alone, and not a single time has anybody come to 'get' me, and they won't you. There's just one thing can happen us. If I get sick or spend too much on eating, and don't pay the rent, the man that owns this building will fire us out. If we, if we," Mickey repeated impressively, "pay our rent regular, in advance, nobody will ever come, not ever, so don't worry."

"You ortn't a-got so much. You'll never get the next rent paid! They'll 'get' me sure."

"Now throttle your engine," advised Mickey. "Stop your car! Smash down on the brakes! They are things the city you reside in furnishes its taxpayers, or something like that, and I pay my rent, so this is my share, and it's things for you: to make you comfortable. Which are you worst—tiredest, or hungriest, or hottest?"

"I don't know," she said.

"Then I'll make a clean get-a-way," said Mickey. "Washing is cooling; and it freshens you up a lot."

So Mickey brought his basin again, and bathed the tir child gently as any woman could have done it.

"See what I got!" he cried as he opened bundles a explained. "I'm going to see if you have fever."

Peaches rebelled at the thermometer.

"Now come on in," urged Mickey. "Slide straig home to your base! If I'm going to take care of you, I going to right. You can't lay here eating wrong things you have fever. No-sir-ee! You don't get to see in at more of these bundles, nor any supper, nor talked to at more, 'til you put this little glass thing under your tong and hold it there just this way"—Mickey showed ho—"three minutes by the clock, then I'll know what to with you next; and I'll sit beside you, and hold your hand and tell you about the pretty lady that sent it."

Mickey wiped the thermometer on the sheet, then presented it. Peaches took one long look at him and open

doctored, so that it would get better. Just try Lily, and if it doesn't help, I won't do it any more."

Peaches took another long look at Mickey, questioning in nature, and turned her back to him.

"Gosh, kid! Your back looks just like horses' going to the fertilizer plant," he said.

"Ain't that swearin's?" asked Peaches promptly.

"First-cousin," answered Mickey. "'Scuse me Lily. If you could see your back, you'd 'scuse worse than that."

"Feelin' ull do fer me," said Peaches. "I live wid it."

"Honest kid, I'm scared to touch you," he wavered.

"Aw g'wan!" said Peaches. "I ain't goin' screechin' even if you hurt awful, an' you touch like a sparrer lookin' for crumbs. Mickey, can we put out a few?"

"For the sparrows? Sure!" cried Mickey. "They're the ones that God sees especial when they fall. Sure! Put out some in a minute. Still now!"

Mickey poured on ointment and began softly rubbing it into the dreadful back. His face was drawn with anxiety and filled with horror. He was afraid, but the nurse said this he should do, and Mickey's first lesson had been implicit obedience to those in power. So he rubbed gently as he was fearful, and when Peaches made no complaint, a little stronger, and a little stronger, until he was tired. Then he covered her and told her to lie on it, and see how it felt. Peaches looked at him with wondering eyes.

"Mickey," she said, "nothin' in all my life ever felt like that, an' the nice cool washin' you do. Mickey-lovest,

nex' time I act mean 'bout what you want to do to m slap me good, an' hold me, an' go on an' do it!"

"Now nix on the beating," said Mickey. "I never he any from my mother; but the kids who lost sales to retook my nickels, and give me plenty. You ought know, Lily, that I'm trying hard as I can to make ye feel good; and to take care of you, and what I want do, I think will make you better, and I'm just nachal going to do it, 'cause you're mine, and you got to do wh I say. But I won't say anything that'll hurt you as make you worse. If you must take time to think not things over, I can wait; but I can't hit you Lily, you're t little, and too sick, and I like you too well. I wish you be a lady! I wish you wouldn't ever be bad again!"

"Hoh I feel so good!" Peaches stretched like a kitte "Mickey, bet I can walk 'fore long if you do that ofte The thieving sparrows, used to watching windows and stealing from stores set out to cool, were soon there. Peaches, to whom anything with feathers was a bird, was filled with joy. The odour of the broth was delicious. Mickey danced and turned handsprings, and made the funniest remarks. Then he fixed the bowl on a paper, broke the crackers in her broth, and was unspeakably happy at her delight as she tasted it.

"Every Saturday you get a box of that from the Nurse Lady," he boasted. "Pretty soon you'll be so fat I can't carry you and so well you can have supper ready when I come and then we can—" Mickey stopped short. He had started to say, "go to the parks," but if other ladies were like the first one he had talked with, and if, as she said, the law would not let him keep Peaches, he had better not try to take her where people would see her.

"Can what?" asked Peaches.

"Have the most fun!" explained Mickey. "We can sit in the window and see the sky and birds, and you can have the shears and cut pictures from the papers I'll bring you, and I'll read all my story books to you. I got three that She gave me for Christmas presents, so I could learn to read them—"

"Mickey could I ever learn to read them?"

"Sure!" cried Mickey. "Surest thing you know! You are awful smart, Lily. You can learn in no time, and then you can read while I'm gone, and it won't seem so long. I'll teach you. Mother taught me. I can read the papers I sell. Honest I can, and I often pick up torn ones I can

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If you. It's lots of fun to know what's going on, a not ll many more by being able to tell what's in them that is who can't read. I look all over the front page and keep a spiel on the cars. I always fold my papers near keep them clean. To-day it was like this: 'Here's r nice, clean, morning paper! Sterilized! Deodor-! Vulcanized!'"

Mickey what does that mean?" asked Peaches.

Now you see how it comes in!" said Mickey. "If you ld read the papers, you'd know. 'Sterilized,' is what y do to the milk in hot weather to save the slum kids. It's us, Lily! 'Deodorized,' is taking the bad smell out hings. 'Vulcanized,' is something they do to stiffen igs. I guess it's what your back needs."

Is all them things done to the papers?" asked Peaches. Well, not all of them," laughed Mickey, "but they are ting in on some of them, and all would be a good thinge other kids who can't read don't know those words study them out and use them, and it catches the crowd they laugh, and then pay me for making them. See

morning paper! Sterilized! Deodorized! Vulcanized! I like to sell them. You like to buy them! Sometimes I sell them! Sometimes I don't! Latest war news! Japan takes England! England takes France! France takes Germany! Germany takes Belgium! Belgium takes the cake! Here's your paper! Nice clean paper! Rush this way! Change your change for a paper! Yes, I like to sell them——' and on and on that way all day, 'til they're gone and every one I pick up and smooth out is gone, and if they're torn and dirty, I carry them back on the cars and sell them for pennies to the poor folks walking home."

"Mickey, will we be slum kids always?" she asked.

"Not on your tin type!" cried Mickey.

"If this is slum kids, I like it!" protested Peaches.

"Well, Sunrise Alley ain't so slummy as where you was, Lily," explained the boy.

"This is grand," said Peaches. "Fine an' grand! No lady needn't have better!"

"She wouldn't say so," said Mickey. "But Lily, you something most of the millyingaire ladies hasn't."

"What Mickey?" she asked interestedly.

"One man all to yourself, who will do what you want, if you ask pretty, and he ain't going to drag you 'round and make you do things you don't like to, and hit you, and swear at you, and get drunk. Gee, I bet the worst you ever had didn't hurt more than I've seen some of the swell dames hurt sometimes. It'd make you sick Lily."

"I guess 'at it would," said the girl, "'cause granny told me the same thing. Lots of times she said 'at she

couldn't see so much in bein' rich if you had to be treat like she saw rich ladies. She said all they got out of was nice dresses an' struttin' when their men was 'round; nelse the money was theirn, an' nen they ma the men pay. She said it was 'bout half and half."

"So 'tis!" cried Mickey. "Tell you Lily, don't le

ever be rich! Let's just have enough."

"Mickey, what is 'enough?" asked Peaches.

"Why plenty, but not too much!" explained Micl judicially. "Not enough to fight over! Just enough be comfortable."

"Mickey, I'm comf'rable as nangel now."

"Gee, I'm glad, Lily," said Mickey in deep satisfacti
"Maybe He heard my S. O. S. after all, and you j
being comfortable is the answer."

CHAPTER IV

"BEARER OF MORNING"

"'I can wash, sir, I can spin, sir, I can sew, and mend, and babies tend."

Leslie.

OUGLAS," called Leslie over the telephone, "I have developed nerves." "Why?" inquired he.

"Dad has just come in with a pair of waist-high boots, and a scalping knife, I think," answered Leslie. going to bring a blanket and a war bonnet?"

"The blanket, I can; the bonnet, I might," said Douglas.

"How early will you be ready?" she asked.

"Whenever you say," he replied.

"Five?" she queried.

"Very well!" he answered. "And Leslie, I would sugzest a sweater, short stout skirts, and heavy gloves. vou know if you are susceptible to poison vines?"

"I have handled anything wild as I pleased all my life," she said. "I am sure there is no danger from that source; but Douglas, did you ever hear of, or see, a massasauga?"

"You are perfectly safe on that score," he said. going along especially to take care of you."

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"All right, then I won't be afraid of snakes," she said.
"I have waders, too," he said, "and I'm going into the

vamp with you. Wherever you wish to go, I will pre-

de you and test the footing."

"Very well! I have lingered on the borders long enough. o-morrow will be my initiation. By night I'll have arned the state of my artistic ability with natural resurces, and I'll know whether the heart of the swamp is ne loveliest sight I ever have seen, and I will have proved ow I 'line up' with a squaw-woman."

"Leslie, I'm now reading a most interesting human ocument," said Douglas, "and in it I have reached the lace where Indians in the heart of terrific winter killed and heaped up a pile of deer in early day in Minnesota, and ent to camp rejoicing, while their squaws were left to alk twenty-eight miles and each carry back on her shoul-

"I heard something, I don't know what," she answered.
"Can you describe it. Leslie?"

"Just a rushing, beating sound! What is it Douglas?"

"My heart, Leslie, sending to you each pulsing, throbbing stroke of my manhood pouring out its love for you."

"Oh-h-h!" cried the astonished girl.

"Will you listen again, Leslie?" begged the man.

"No!" she said.

"You don't want to hear what my heart has to say to you?" he asked.

"Not over a wire! Not so far away!" she panted.

"Then I'll shorten the distance. I'm coming, Leslie!"
"What shall I do?" she gasped.

She stared around her, trying to decide whether she would remain where she was, or follow her impulse to hide, when her father entered the room.

"Daddy," she cried, "if you want to be nice to me, go away a little while. Go somewhere a few minutes and stay until I call you."

"Leslie, what's the matter?" he asked.

"I've been talking to Douglas, and Daddy, he's coming like a charging Highland trooper. Daddy, I heard him drop the receiver and start. Please, please go away a minute. Even the dearest father in the world can't do anything now! We must settle this ourselves."

"I'm not to be allowed a word?" he protested.

"Daddy, you've had two years! If you know anything o say against Douglas and haven't said it in all that time,

why should you begin now? You couldn't help knowir Daddy, do go! There he is! I hear him!"

Mr. Winton took his daughter in his arms and gripp her tight, kissed her tenderly, and left the room, his ey wet. A second later Douglas Bruce entered and rushi across caught Leslie to his breast roughly, and with strong hand pressed her ear against his heart.

"Now you listen, my girl!" he cried. "You listen

close range."

Leslie remained quiet a long second. Then she lift her face, adorable, misty eyed and tenderly smiling.

"Douglas, I never listened to a heart before! How do know what it is saying? I can't tell whether it is talki about me or protesting against the way you've been rus ing around!"

"No levity, my lady," he said grimly. "This is serio

rhile Mr. Winton and the driver went to the nearest a settlement to find the squaw who had made the basket, and explain the situation to her enough to her to come with them.

rou have experienced the same emotions you will how Douglas and Leslie felt when hand in hand they id the swamp on a perfect morning in late May. If ave not, mere words are inadequate.

rough fern and brake head high, through sumac, willder, buttonbush, gold-yellow and blood-red osiers, northern holly, over spongy moss carpet of palest present green up-piled for ages, over red-veined pitcher spilling their fullness, among scraggy, odorous acks, beneath which cranberries and rosemary were ing; through ethereal pale mists of dawn, in their ark songs of morning from the fields, hermit thrushes swamp, bell birds tolling molten notes, in a minor a swelling chorus of sparrows, titmice, warblers, went two strong, healthy young people newly sed for "better or worse." They could only look, ner, flush, and utter broken exclamations, all about er." They could not remotely conceive that life serve them the cruel trick of "worse."

lie sank to her knees. Douglas lifted her up, set her in firmest location he could see, and adored her with es and reverent touch. Since that first rough grasp drew her to him, Leslie had felt positively fragile in inds. She smiled at him her most beautiful smile wide-eved with emotion.

"Douglas, why just now, when you've waited two years?" she asked.

"Wanted a degree of success to offer," he answered.

Leslie disdained the need for success.

"Wanted you to have time to know me as completely as bossible."

Leslie intimated that she could learn faster.

"Wanted to have the acknowledged right to put my body between yours and any danger this swamp might have to offer to-day."

"Exactly what I thought!" cried she.

"Wise girl," commented the man.

"Douglas, I must hurry!" said Leslie. "It may take a long time to find the flowers I want, and I've no idea what I shall do for a basket."

Then they proceeded to hurry by adoring each other for ifteen minutes more while the water arose higher around must stop listening for birds Douglas, and I can scarcely atch for flowers or vines. I have to keep all the time oking to make sure that you are really my man."

"And I, that you are my woman. Leslie, that expreson and this location, the fact that you are in competition ith a squaw and the Indian talk we have indulged in tely, all conspire to remind me that a few days ago, while was still a 'searcher' myself, I read a poem called 'Song I the Search' that was the biggest thing of its kind that have yet found in our language. It was so great that reread it until I am sure I can do it justice. Listen my Bearer of Morning,' my 'Bringer of Song——'"

Douglas stood straight as the tamaracks, his feet sinking i "the little moss," and from his heart quoted Constance kinner's wonderful poem:

"'I descend through the forest alone. Rose-flushed are the willows, stark and a-quiver, In the warm sudden grasp of Spring; Like a woman when her lover has suddenly, swiftly taken her. I hear the secret rustle of little leaves, Waiting to be born. The air is a wind of love From the wings of eagles mating-O eagles, my sky is dark with your wings! The hills and the waters pity me, The pine-trees reproach me. The little moss whispers under my feet. "Son of Earth, Brother, Why comest thou hither alone?" Oh, the wolf has his mate on the mountain-Where art thou, Spring-daughter? I tremble with love as reeds by the river,

I burn as the dusk in the red-tented west, I call thee aloud as the deer calls the doe, I await thee as hills wait the morning, I desire thee as eagles the storm; I yearn to thy breast as night to the sea, I claim thee as the silence claims the stars. O Earth, Earth, great Earth, Mate of God and mother of me, Say, where is she, the Bearer of Morning, My Bringer of Song? Love in me waits to be born, Where is She, the Woman?'

"Where is she, the Woman?' The answer is 'Hen 'Bearer of Morning,' 'Bringer of Song,' I adore you!"
"Oh Douglas, how beautiful!" cried Leslie. "My Macan we think of anything save ourselves to-day? C we make that basket?"

"It would be a bad start to give up our first undertaki

"Douglas, could there be more wonderful flowers than the moccasins and slippers?" she asked.

"Scarcely more wonderful; there might be more delicate and lovely!"

"Farther! Let us go farther!" she urged.

Her cry closed the man's arms around her.

"Oh my Heavenly Father!" breathed the girl.

"Dear Lord!" said Douglas.

Then there was a long silence during which, clasping each other, they stood on the edge of a small open space breathlessly worshipping, and it was the Almighty they were now adoring. Here the moss lay in a flat carpet, inted deeper green. Water willow rolled its ragged red-lish-tan hoops, with swelling bloom and leaf buds. Overflowing pitcher plants grew in irregular beds, and on lender stems lifted high their flat buds. But scattered in groups here and there, sometimes with massed similar colours, sometimes in clumps and variegated patches, stood the rare, early fringed orchis, some almost white, where pale lavender and again the deeper colour of the moccasins; while everywhere on stems, some a foot high, nodded the exquisite lavender and white showy orchis.

"Count!" he commanded.

Leslie pointed a slender finger indicating each as she spoke: "One, two, three—thirty-two, under the sweep of your arms, Douglas! And more! More by the hundred! Surely if we are careful not to kill them, the Lord won't mind if we take out a few for people to see, will He?"

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"He must have made them to be seen!" said Douglas.
"And worshipped!" cried the girl.

"Douglas, why didn't the squaw-?" asked Leslie.

"Maybe she didn't come this far," he said. "Perhaps e knows by experience that these are too fragile to reove. You may not be able to handle them, Leslie."

"I'm going to try," she said. "But first I must ake my basket. We'll go back to the osiers, and weave and then come here and fill it. Oh Douglas! Did you er see such flower perfection in all your life?"

"Only in books! In my home country applied botany a part of every man's education. I never have seen gged or fringed orchids growing before. I have read of any fruitless searches for the white ones."

"So have I. They seem to be the rarest. Douglas, ok there!"

"No," she answered. "I'm going back and weave my basket. There is nothing to surpass the orchids in rarity and wondrous beauty."

"Good!" he cried. "I'll go ahead and you follow."

So they returned to the osiers. Leslie pondered deeply a few seconds and then resolutely putting Douglas aside, she began cutting armloads of pale yellow osiers. Finding a suitable place to work, she swiftly and deftly selected perfect, straight evenly coloured ones and cut them the same length, binding the tip ends firmly with raffia she had brought to substitute for grass. Then with fine slips she began weaving, gradually spreading the twigs and inwardly giving thanks for the lessons she had taken in basketry. At last she held up a big, pointed, yellow basket.

"Ready!" she said.

"Beautiful!" cried Douglas.

Leslie carefully lined the basket with moss in which the flowers grew, working the heads between the open spaces she had left. She bent three twigs, dividing her basket top in exact thirds. One of these she filled with the whitest, one with stronger, and one with the deepest lavender, placing the tallest plants in the centre so that the outside ones would show completely. Then she lifted by the root exquisite showy orchis, lavender-hooded, white-lipped, the tiniest plants she could select and set them around the edge. She bedded the moss-wrapped roots in the basket and began bordering the rim and entwining the handle with a delicate vine. She looked up at Douglas, her face thrilled with triumph, flushed with

exertion, her eyes humid with feeling, and he gazed at her stirred to the depth of his heart with sympathy and the wonder of possession.

"Bearer of Morning,' you win!" he cried triumphantly.

"There is no use going farther. Let me carry that to your father, and he too will say so."

"I have a reason for working out our plan," she said.

"Yes? May I know?" he asked.

"Surely!" she answered. "You remember what you told me about the Minturns. I can't live in a city and not have my feelings harrowed every day, and while I'd like to change everything wrong, I know I can't all of it, so what I can't cope with must be put aside; but this refuses, it is insistent. When you really think of it, that is so dreadful, Douglas. If they once felt what we do now, could it all go? There must be something left! You mention him

em see that at least our part of the world thinks of them gether, and expects them to be friends. Splendid!"
"I have finished," said Leslie.

"I quite agree," answered Douglas. "No one could do etter. That is the ultimate beauty of the swamp made anifest. There is the horn! Your father is waiting."

A surprise was also waiting. Mr. Winton had not ally found the squaw who brought the first basket, but he ad made her understand so thoroughly what was wanted at she had come with him, and at his suggestion she had placed the moccasin basket as exactly as she could and so made an effort at decoration. She was smiling woodly when Leslie and Douglas approached, but as Leslie's ther glimpsed and cried out over her basket, the squaw owned and drew back.

"Where you find 'em?" she demanded.

"In the swamp!" Leslie nodded backward.

The squaw grunted disapprovingly. "Lowry no buy m! Sell slipper! Sell moccasin! No sell weed!"

Leslie looked with shining eyes at her father.

"That lies with Lowry," he said. "I'll drive you there ad bring you back, and you'll have the ride and the money or your basket. That's all that concerns you. We won't sme here to make any more."

The squaw smiled again and they started for the city. hey drove straight to the Winton residence for the slipers. While Mr. Winton and the squaw went to take the skets to Lowry's and leave Douglas at his office, Leslie his car went to Mrs. Minturn's.

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"Don't think I'm crazy," laughed Leslie, as Mrs. Minirn came down to meet her. "I want to use your exnisite taste and art instinct a few minutes. Please do ome with me. We've a question up. You know the onderful stuff the Indians bring down from the swamps and sell on the streets and to the florists?"

"Indeed yes! I often buy of them in the spring. I love the wild white violets especially. What is it you want?" "Why you see," said Leslie, looking eagerly in Mrs. Inturn's face, "you see there are three flower baskets at owry's, and Douglas Bruce is going to buy me the one I ant most for a present, to celebrate a very important ecasion, and I can't tell which is most artistic. I want ou to decide. Your judgment is so unfailing. Will you ome? Only a little spin!"

"Leslie, you aren't by any chance asking me to select

"BEARER OF MORNING"

u see," said Leslie, "Mr. Bruce has a living income; have I, from my mother. Fortunes seem to me to nore trouble than they do good. I believe poor e happiest, and get most out of life, and after all ives deep, heart-felt joy, is the thing to live for,

But we must hurry. Mr. Lowry didn't promise the flowers long."

be ready in a minute, but I see where Douglas Bruce; you wrong ideas," said Mrs. Minturn. "He needs talking to. Money is the only thing worth while, comfort and the pleasure it brings. Without it crippled, handicapped, a slave crawling while others er you. I'll convince him! Back in a minute."

1 Mrs. Minturn returned she was in a delightful ner face eager and her dress was beautiful. Leslie ed if this woman ever had known a care, then rered that not long before she had lost a little daugheslie explained as they went swiftly through the

won't mind waiting just a second until I run up to uce's offices?" she asked..

'as ready and together they stopped at Mr. Minloor and Douglas whispered: "Watch the office le is Minturn's Little Brother I told you about." nodded and entered gaily.

ase ask Mr. Minturn if he will see Miss Winton and uglas Bruce a minute?" she said.

lert, bright-faced lad bowed politely, laid aside a 1d entered the inner office.

"Now let me!" said Leslie.

"Good May, Mr. Minturn!" she cried. "Posit enchanting! Take that forbidding look off your face come for a few minutes Maying! It will do you good, and me more. All my friends are pleasuring n day. And I want as good a friend of Mr. Bruce as to be in something we have planned. You just mus

"Has something delightful happened?" asked Mr. turn, retaining the hand Leslie offered him as he turn

Douglas Bruce.

"You must ask Miss Winton," he said.

Mr. Minturn's eyes questioned her sparkling face again with closed lips she nodded. "My most earnes gratulations to each of you. May life grant you even than you hope for, and from your faces, that is no wish to make for you. Surely I'll come! What is in home planned?"

"Very well," Mr. Minturn said gravely. "I'm surprised, but also pleased. Beautiful young ladies have not appealed to me so often of late that I can afford to miss the chance of humouring the most charming of her sex."

"How lovely!" laughed Leslie. "Douglas, did you ever know Mr. Minturn could flatter like that? It's most enjoyable! I shall insist on more of it, at every opportunity! Really, Mr. Minturn, society has missed you of late, and it is our loss. We need men who are worth while."

"Now it is you who flatter," smiled Mr. Minturn.

"See my captive!" cried Leslie, as she emerged from the building and crossed the walk to the car. "Mr. Bruce and Mr. Minturn are great friends, so as we passed his door we brought him along by force."

"It certainly would require that to bring him anywhere in my company," said Mrs. Minturn coldly.

The shock of the cruelty of the remark closed Douglas' lips, but it was Leslie's day to bubble, and she resolutely set herself to heal and cover the hurt.

"I think business is a perfect bugbear," she said as she entered the car. "I'm going to have a pre-nuptial agreement as to just how far work may trespass on Douglas' time, and how much belongs to me. I think it can be arranged. Daddy and I always have had lovely times together, and I would call him successful. Wouldn't you?"

"A fine business man!" said Mr. Minturn heartily.

"You could have had much greater advantages if he had made more money," said Mrs. Minturn.

"The advantage of more money-yes," retorted Leslie

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uickly, "but would the money have been of more advanage to me than the benefits of his society and his personal and in my rearing? I think not! I prefer my Daddy!" "When you take your place in society, as the mistress of home, you will find that millions will not be too much," aid Mrs. Minturn.

"If I had millions, I'd give most of them away, and just of on living about as I do now with Daddy," said Leslie. "Leslie, where did you get bitten with this awful, common—what kind of an idea shall I call it? You haven't nbibed socialistic tendencies have you?"

"Haven't a smattering of what they mean!" laughed eslie. "The 'istics' scare me completely. Just social leas are all I have: thinking home better than any other lace on earth, the way you can afford to have it. Merely eing human and kind and interested in what my men are eing and what they are enjoying and helping any one

sic lover with your trained ear could have spent an ur in that swamp this morning. You'd soon know were Verdi and Strauss found some of their loveliest emes, and where Beethoven got the bird notes for the took scene of the Pastoral Symphony. Think how intested you'd be in a yellow and black bird singing the pinning Song from Martha, and you couldn't accuse the bird of having stolen it from Flotow, could you? The bird holds right of priority!"

"If you weren't a little fool and talking purposely to ritate me, you'd almost cause me to ask if you seriously wean that?" said Mrs. Minturn.

"Why," laughed Leslie, determined not to become prooked on this her great day, "that is a matter you can set for yourself. If you haven't a score of Martha, get ne and I'll take you where you can hear a bird sing that rain, and you may judge for yourself."

"I don't believe it!" said Mrs. Minturn tersely, "but it were true, that would be the most wonderful experience ever had in my life."

"And it would cost you only ten cents," scored Leslie. You needn't ride beyond the end of the car line for 12t, and a woman who can dance all night surely could alk far enough past that, to reach any old orchard. hat's what I am trying to tell you. Money in large 12ntities isn't necessary to provide the most interesting 12nd ings in the world, and millions don't bring happiness. can find more in what you would class almost poverty."

"Why don't you try it?" suggested Mrs. Minturn.

"But I have!" said Leslie. "And I enjoy it! I coul go with a man I love as I do Daddy, and make a home and get joy I never have found in society, from just who we two could do with our own hands in the woods. I don like a city. If Daddy's business didn't keep him here, would be in the country this minute. Look at us poor sou trying to find pleasure in a basket from the swamp, whe we might have the whole swamp. I'd be happy to live at its door if I might. Now try a basket full of i There are three, and you are to examine each of the carefully, and then write on a slip of paper which yo think the most artistic, and you are not to say think that will influence each other's decisions, or Mr. Lowry' I want a straight opinion from each of you."

They entered the florist's, and on a glass table faced th

Another long silence.

Then: "Honestly Leslie, did you hear a bird sing that strain from Martha?"

"Yes!" said Leslie, "I did. And if you will go with me to the swamp where those flowers came from, you shall hear one sing a strain that will instantly remind you of the opening chorus, and another render Di Provenza Il Mar from Traviata."

The lady turned again to the flowers. She was thinking something deep and absorbing, but no one could have guessed exactly what it might be. Finally: "I have decided," she said. "Shall we number these one, two, and three, and so indicate them?"

"Yes," said Leslie a little breathlessly.

"Put your initials to the slips and I'll read them," offered Douglas. Then he smilingly read aloud: "Mr. Lowry, one. Mrs. Minturn, two. Mr. Minturn, three!"

"I cast the deciding vote," cried Leslie. "One!"

The squaw seemed to think of a war-whoop, but decided against it.

"Now be good enough to state your reasons," said Mr. Winton. "Why do you prefer the slipper basket, Mr. Lowry?"

"It satisfies my sense of the artistic."

"Why the fringed basket, Mrs. Minturn?"

"Because it contains daintier, more wonderful flowers than the others, and is by far the most pleasing production."

"Now Minturn, your turn. Why do you like the moc-

- "It makes the deepest appeal to me," he answered.
- "But why?" persisted Mr. Winton.
- "If you will have it—the moccasins are the colour once loved on the face of my little daughter."
- "Now Leslie!" said Mr. Winton hurriedly as he noted Mrs. Minturn's displeased look.
 - "Must I tell?" she asked.
 - "Yes," said her father.
 - "Douglas selected it for me, and so I like it best."
- "But Leslie!" cried Douglas, "there were only tw baskets when I favoured that. Had the fringed orchids bee here then, I most certainly should have chosen them. think yours far the most exquisite! I claim it now. Wi you give it to me?"
 - "Surely! I'd love to," laughed the girl.
 - "You have done your most exquisite work on th

"Majorities mean masses, and masses are notoriously insane!" said Mrs. Minturn.

"But this is a small, select majority," said Leslie.

"Craziest of all," said Mrs. Minturn decidedly. "If you have finished with us, I want to thank you for the pleasure of seeing these, and Leslie, some day I really think I will try that bird music. The idea interests me more than anything I ever heard of. If it were true, it would be wonderful, a new experience!"

"If you want to hear for yourself, make it soon, because now is nesting time, and not again until next spring will the music be so entrancing. I can go any day."

"I'll look over my engagements and call you. If one ever had a minute to spare!"

"Another of the joys of wealth!" said Leslie. "Only the poor can afford to 'loaf and invite their souls.' The flowers you will see will delight your eyes, quite as much as the music your ears."

"I doubt your logic, but I'll try the birds. Are you coming Mr. Minturn?"

"Not unless you especially wish me. Are these for sale?" he asked, picking up the moccasins.

"Only those," replied the florist.

"Send your bill," he said, turning with the basket.

"You condemn the riches you never have been able to amass, and at the same time spend like a millionaire."

"I never said I was not able to gain millions," replied Mr. Minturn coldly. "I have had frequent opportuni-

ties! I merely refused them, because I did not consider them legitimate. As for my method in buying the flowers, in this one instance, price does not matter. You can guess what I shall do with them."

"I couldn't possibly!" answered Mrs. Minturn. "The only sure venture I could make is that they will not by any chance come to me."

"No. These go to baby Elizabeth," he said. "Do you want to come with me to take them to her?"

With an audible sneer she passed him, and he stepped aside and gravely raised his hat, while the others said good-bye to him and followed.

"Positively insufferable!" cried Mrs. Minturn. "Every one of my friends say they do not know how I endure his insults and I certainly will not many more. I don't, I really don't know what he expects."

Mr. Winton and Douglas Bruce were confused, while

Mine are perfect little devils, and all the trouble James and I ever had came through them. His idea of a mother is a combined doctor, wet-nurse and nursery maid, and I must say, I far from agree with him. What are servants for if not to take the trouble of children off your hands?"

Leslie was glad to reach the rich woman's door and deposit her there.

As the car sped away the girl turned a despairing face toward Douglas: "For the love of Moike!" she cried. "Isn't that shocking? Poor Mr. Minturn!"

"I don't pity him half so much as I do her," he answered. "What must a woman have suffered or been through, to warp, twist, and harden her like that?"

"Society life," answered Leslie, "as it is lived by people of wealth who are aping royalty and the titled classes."

"A branch of them—possibly," conceded Douglas. "I know some titled and wealthy people who would be dumbfounded over that woman's ideas."

"So do I," said Leslie. "Of course there are exceptions. Sometimes the exception becomes bigger than the rule, but not in our richest society. Douglas, let's keep close together! Oh don't let's ever drift into such a state as that. I should have asked them to lunch, but I couldn't. If that is the way she is talking before her friends, surely she won't have many, soon."

"Then her need for a real woman like you will be all the greater," answered Douglas. "I suppose you should have asked her; but I'm delighted that you didn't! Toay began so nearly perfect, I want to end it with only ou and your father. Will he resent me, Leslie?"

"It all depends on us. If we are selfish and leave him one he will feel it. If we can make him realize gain stead of loss he will be happier than he is now."

"I wish I hadn't felt obliged to reject his offer the other

ght. I'm very sorry about it."

"I'm not," said Leslie. "You have a right to live your fe in your own way. I have seen enough of running for fice, elections and appointments that I hate it. You the work you educated yourself for and I'll help you." "Then my success is assured," laughed Douglas. "Lese, may I leave my basket here and will you care for it ke yours, and may I come to see it often?"

"No. You may come to see me and look at the basket icidentally," she answered.

"Do you think Mrs Minturn will go to the swamp to



""I can wash, sir, I can spin, sir, I can sew and mend, and babies tend""



"Oh you 'Bringer of Song'!" exulted Douglas. "I'd rather hear you sing that than any bird, but from what she said, Nellie Minturn won't care particularly for it!"

"She may not approve of, or practise, the sentiment," said Leslie, "but she'll love the music and possibly the musician."

CHAPTER V

LITTLE BROTHER

'If it's the Big Brother bee you got in your bonnet, pull its stinger I let it die an unnatural death." Mickey.

OW what am I going to do yet to make the day shorter, Lily?" asked Mickey.
"I guess I got everything," she answered. There's my lunch. Here's my pictures to cut. Here's lesson to learn. There's my sky and bird crumbs. ckey, sometimes they hop right in on the sheet. Yes-

"Then of course it's so," agreed Peaches. "That gives us as good a chance as anybody."

"Course it does if we got sense to take it," said Mickey. "We got to wake up and make something of ourselves. Let me see if you know your lesson for to-day yet. There is the picture of the animal—there is the word that spells its name. Now what is it?"

"Milk!" answered Peaches, her eyes mischievous.

Mickey held over the book chuckling.

"All right! There is the word for that, too. For being so smart, Miss Chicken, you can learn it 'fore you get any more to drink. If I have good luck to-day, I'm going to blow in about six o'clock with a slate and pencil for you; and then you can print the words you learn, and make pictures. That'll help make the day go a lot faster."

"Oh it goes fast enough now," said Peaches. "I love days with you and the window and the birds. I wish they'd sing more though."

"When your back gets well, I'll take you to the country where they sing all the time," promised Mickey, "where there are grass, and trees, and flowers, and water to wade in and—"

"Mickey, stop and go on!" cried Peaches. "Sooner you start, the sooner I'll get my next verse. I want just norful good one to-night."

She held up her arms. Mickey submitted to a hug and a little cold dab on his forehead, counted his money, locked the door and ran. On the car he sat in deep thought and suddenly sniggered aloud. He had achieved the next in-

stallment of the doggerel to which every night Peac insisted on having a new verse added as he entered. secured his papers, and glimpsing the headlines started his beat crying them lustily.

Mickey knew that washing, better air, enough food, soil rubbing were improving Peaches. What he did know was that adding the interest of her presence to life, even though it made his work heavier, was showing him. He actually seemed bigger, stronger, and his is brighter and fuller. He swung down the street thrush his papers right and left, crossed and went up the ot side, watching closely for a customer. It was ten o'cl and opportunities with the men were almost over. Mic turned to scan the street for anything even suggesting sale. He saw none and started with his old cry, watch as he went: "I like to sell papers! Sometimes I sell the

"Not to-day, thank you," she said. "I'm shopping, and I don't wish to carry it."

Mickey saw Peaches' slate vanishing. It was a beautiful slate, small so it would not tire her bits of hands, and its frame was covered with red. His face sobered, his voice changed and took on unexpected modulations.

"Aw lady! I thought you'd buy my paper! Far down the street I saw you coming. Lady, I like your gentle wice. I like your pleasant smile! You don't want a nice sterilized paper?—lady."

The lady stopped short; she lifted Mickey's chin in a firm grip, and looked intently into his face.

"Just by the merest chance, could your name be Mickey?" she asked.

"Sure, lady! Mickey! Michael O'Halloran!"

Her smile became even more attractive.

"I really don't want to be bothered with a paper," she said; "but I do wish a note delivered. If you'll carry it, I'll pay you the price of half a dozen papers."

"Gets the slate!" cried Mickey, bouncing like a rubber boy. "Sure I will! Is it ready, lady?"

"One minute!" she said and stepped to the inside of the walk, opened her purse, wrote a line on a card, slipped it in an envelope, addressed it and handed it to Mickey.

"You can read that?" she asked.

"I've read worse writing than that," he assured her.
"You ought to see the hieroglyphics some of the dimunstudded dames put up!"

Mickey took a last glimpse at the laughing face, and

wheeling ran. Presently he went into a big building, and studied the address board, then entered the elevator and following a corridor reached the number.

He paused a second, glanced around and his eyes caught the name on the opposite door. A flash passed over his face. "Ugh!" he muttered. "'Member now—been to this place before! Glad she ain't sending a letter to hat man." He stepped inside the open door before him, crossed the room and laid the note near a man who was bending over some papers on a desk. The man reached a groping hand, tore open the envelope, taking therefrom a card on which was pencilled: "Could this by any chance be your Little Brother?"

He turned hastily, glanced at Mickey, and in a coninuous movement arose with outstretched hand.

"Why Little Brother," he cried, "I'm so glad to see

"What is your business?" was the next question.

"Selling papers. What's yours?" was the answer.

"I've been here only two years, and it is slow getting a start. I often have more time to spare than I wish I had, and I'm lonesome no end."

"Is your mother dead?" asked Mickey solicitously.

"Yes," answered Douglas.

"So's mine!" he commented. "You do get lonesome! Course she was a good one?"

"The very finest, Mickey," said Douglas. "And yours?"

"Same here, Mister," said Mickey with conviction.

"Well since we are both motherless and lonesome, suppose we be brothers!" suggested Douglas.

"Aw-w-w!" Mickey shook his head.

"No?" questioned Douglas.

"What's the use?" cried Mickey.

"You could help me with my work and share my play, and possibly I could be of benefit to you."

"I just wondered if you wasn't getting to that," commented Mickey.

"Getting to what?" inquired Douglas.

"Going to do me good!" explained Mickey. "The swell stiffs are always going to do us fellows good. Mostly they do! They do us good and brown! They pick us up a while and make lap dogs of us, and then when we've lost our appetites for our jobs and got to having a hankerin' for the fetch and carry business away they go and forget us,

d we're a lot worse off than we were before. Some of e fellows come out of it knowing more ways to be mean an they ever learned on the street," explained Mickey. f it's that Big Brother bee you got in your bonnet, pull stinger and let it die an unnatural death! Nope! one! Good-bye!"

"Mickey, wait!" cried Douglas.

"Me business calls, an' I must go—'way to my ranch in aho!" gaily sang Mickey.

"I'd like to shake you!" said Douglas Bruce.

"Well, go on," said Mickey. "I'm here and you're enough."

"If I thought it would jolt out your fool notions and ake some sense in, I would," said Douglas indignantly. "Now look here, Kitchener," said Mickey. "Did I one word that ain't so, and that you don't know is so?"

"'Scuse me, Brother," he said politely, "but that's most wo funny for any use. Once I took a whirl with that gentleman myself, and whether he does or not, I know the place where he ought to get off. See? Answer me this: why would he be spending money and taking all that time for a 'newsy' when he hardly knows his own kids if he sees them, and they're the wickedest little rippers in the park. Just why now?"

Douglas Bruce closed the door; then he came back and placing a chair for Mickey, he took one opposite.

"Sit down Mickey," he said patiently. "There's a reason for my being particularly interested in James Minturn, and the reason hinges on the fact you mention: that he can't control his own sons, and yet can make a boy he loves and takes comfort in, of a street gamin."

Mickey's eyes narrowed and he sat very straight in the thair he had accepted.

"If he's made so much of him, it sort of proves that he vasn't a gamin. Some of the boys are a long shot closer tentlemen than the guys who are experimenting with them; cause they were born rich and can afford it. If your riend's going to train his pick-up to be what he is, then hat boy would stand a better chance on his own side the urb. See? I've been right up against that gentleman rith the documents and I know him. Also her! Gee! Tear up de choild and gimme de papers' was meant for joke; but I saw that lady and gentleman do it. See? and she was the prettiest little pink and yellow thing.

ord! I can see her gasping and blinking now! Makes ne sick! If the boy across the hall had seen what I did, e'd run a mile and never stop. Gee!"

Douglas Bruce stared aghast. At last he said slowly: Mickey, you are getting mighty close the very thing I vish to know. If I tell you what I know of James Minurn, will you tell me what you know and think?"

"Sure!" said Mickey readily. "I got no reasons for oving him. I wouldn't convoy a millying to the mint or that gentleman!"

"Mickey, shall I go first, or will you?"

"I will," replied Mickey instantly, "'cause when I finish ou'll save your breath. See?"

"I see," said Douglas Bruce. "Proceed."

"Well, 'twas over two years ago," said Mickey, leanng forward and looking Bruce in the eyes. "I hadn't walked off with the entrance policeman. Soon as she and Bobbie got interested, the kids began sliding off the bench and running around the fountain. The girl was only 'bout two or three, a fat toddly thing, trying to do what her brothers did, and taking it like the gamest kid you ever saw when they pushed her off the seat, and tripped her, and 'bused her like a dog.

"Me and the woman were getting madder every minte. 'Go tell your nurse,' says she. But the baby thing ust glanced where nurse was and kind of shivered and aughed, and ran on round the fountain, and the big boy tuck his foot out and she fell. Nursie saw and started for er, but she scrambled up and went kiting for the bench, nd climbed on it, so nurse told her she'd cut the blood out f her if she did that again, and went back to her police-Soon as she was gone those little devils began oaxing their sister to get down and run again. At last he began to smile the cunningest and slipped to the walk, ben a little farther, and a little farther, all the time laughare and watching the nurse. The big boy, he said, 'You in't nothing but a girl! You can't step on the edge like can and then step back!' She says, 'C'n too!' and she lid to show him, and just as she did she saw that he was poing to push her, and she tried to get back, but he did push, and over she went! Not real in, but her arms in, and her dress front some wet.

"She screamed and the little devil that pushed her grabbed her, pretending to be pulling her out. Honest be did! Up came nurse just frothing, and in language we

ouldn't understand she ripped and raved, and she fragged little pink back, and grabbed her by the hair and racked her head two or three times against the stone! The lady screamed, and so did I, and we both ran at her. The boys just shouted and laughed and the smallest one ne up and kicked her while she was down. The policeman valked over laughing too, but he told nurse that was too ough, and my lady pitched in, so he told her to tend to her pusiness, that those kids were too tough to live, and deserved all they got. The nurse laughed at her, and went back to the grass with the policeman, and the baby lay here on the stones, and never made a sound. She just kind of gasped, and blinked, and lay there, and my lady went almost wild. She went to her and stooped to lift her up and she got awful sick. The policeman said somehing to the nurse, and she came and dragged the kid

and said, 'Course eating too much made her sick!' She nodded at him and said, 'Course! You get two dishes of ice and two pieces of cake for remembering!' and she loaded them in and they drove away.

"My lady was as white as marble and she said, 'Is there any way to find out who they are?' I said, 'Sure! Half a dozen!' 'Boy,' she said, 'get their residence for me and I'll give you a dollar.' Ought to seen me fly. Car was chuffing away, waiting to get the traffic cop's sign when to cut in on the avenue. I just took a dodge and hung on to the extra tire under the top and nobody saw me, and when they stopped, I got the house number they went in. Little pink was lying all white and limber yet, and nurse looked worried as she carried her up, and she said something fierce to the boys, the big one rang and they went inside. I saw a footman take the girl. I heard nurse begin that 'eat too much' story and I cut back to the park. The lady said, 'Get it?' I said, 'Sure! Dead easy.' She said, 'Can you take me?' I said, 'Glad to!'

"She said, 'That was the dreadfullest sight I ever saw. That child's mother is going to know right now what kind of a nurse she is paying to take care of her children. You come show me,' she said, so we went.

"'Will you come in with me?' she asked when we got there and I said, 'Yes!'

"Well, we rang and she asked pleasant to see the lady of the house on a little matter of important business, and pretty soon here comes one of the dimun-studded, fashion-paper ladies, all smiling sweet as honey, and asked what the business was. My nice lady she said her nowas Mrs. John Wilson and her husband was a banke Plymouth, Illinois, and she was in the city shopping went to the park to rest and was talking to me, wher automobile let out a nurse, and two boys and a loolittle pink girl, and she give the number and asked, 'the car and the children hers?' The dimun-lady ske sort of began to freeze over, and when the nice lady that far, she said, 'I have an engagement. Kindly so in a few words what you want.'

"My lady sort of stiffened up and then she said, 'I this boy here saw, and the park policeman nearest the trance fountain saw your nurse take your little girl by hair, and strike her head against the fountain curb t times, because her brother pushed her in. She lay in sible until the car came, and she has just been carried

"'God only knows what you country women would do!' the woman answered.

"'We would stand between our children and beastly ruelty,' my lady said. 'Your child's condition is all the roof my words need. You go examine her head, and eel the welt on it; see how ill she is and you will thank me. 'our nurse is not reliable! Keep her and your children rill be ruined, if not killed.'

"'Raving!' sneered the dimun-lady. 'But I know your ind and I'll go, as it's the only way to get rid of you.'

"Now what do you think happened next? Well sir, bout three minutes in walked the footman and salutes, neering like a cat, and he said, 'Madam's compliments. he finds her little daughter in perfect condition, sweetly leeping, and her sons having dinner. She asks you to see ow quickly you can leave her residence.'

"The woman looked at me and I said: 'It's all over but urying the kid if it dies; come on, lady, they'd be glad to lant it, and get it out of the way.' So I started and she blowed, and just as he let me out the door I handed him his: 'I saw you listen and cut to tell, and I bet you helped ut the kid to sleep! But you better look out! She gave to that baby too rough for any use!'

"He started for me, but I flew, and when we got on the treet, the lady was all used up so she couldn't say anything. She had me call a taxi to take her to her hotel, and leet down her name she gave me, and her house and street number. I cut to a Newsies' directory and got the name of the owner of the palace-place and it was Mrs. James

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Minturn. Next morning coming down on the cars I was hunting headliners to make up a new call, like I always do, and there I saw in big type, 'Mr. and Mrs. James Minturn prostrate over the sudden death of their lovely little daughter from poisoning, from an ice she ate.' I read it every word. Even what the doctors said, and how investigation of the source the ice came from was to be made. What do you think of it?"

"I have no doubt but it's every word horrible truth," answered Douglas.

"Sure!" said Mickey. "I just hiked to the park and walked up to the cop and showed him the paper, and he looked awful glum. I can point him out to you, and give you the lady's address, and there were plenty more who saw parts of it could be found if anybody was on the kid's side. Sure it's the truth!

es, and addresses, even the copper's name I'd got; old him all I've told you, and considerable more. n't so fiery as the lady, so I told him the whole nd he never opened his trap. He just sat still and stened till I quit, and finally he heaved a big breath ked at me sort of dazed like and he said: 'What do nt, boy?'

t made me red hot and I said: 'I want you to know aw the same woman bust one of your boys a good ver the head, a few minutes ago.'

t made him jump, but he didn't say or do anyo I got up and went—and—the same woman was ark with the same boys yesterday, and they're the little devils there. What's the answer?"

eartbroken man," said Douglas Bruce. "Now let you, Mickey."

he told Mickey all he knew of James Minturn. the same, he ought to be able to do something for kids, 'stead of boys who don't need it half so bad," ited Mickey. "Why honest, I don't know one id so low that he'd kick a little girl—after she'd at up scandalous, for his meanness to start on. I don't! I don't care what he is doing for the has got, that boy doesn't need help half so much wn; I can prove it to you, if you'll come with ite park 'most any morning."

right, I'll come," said Douglas promptly.

l I couldn't say that they would be there this min-

ute," said Mickey, "but I can call you up the first ti see they are."

"All right, I'll come, if it's possible. I'd like to for myself. So this gives you a settled prejudice ag: the Big Brother movement, Mickey?"

"In my brogans, what would it give you?"

"A hard jolt!" said Douglas emphatically.

"Then what's the answer?"

"That it is more unfair than I thought you could be deprive me of my Little Brother, because you deen man across the hall unfit to have one. Do I look as it couldn't trust me, Mickey?"

"No, you don't! And neither does Mr. James Min He looks as if a fellow could get a grip on him and pull across Belgium hanging on. But you know I said same woman—"

"I know Mickey but that only proves that the

That lets me out," said Mickey. "She educated me ! No day is long enough for the work I do right now; can take my word for it that I'm respectable, same as aking yours that you are."

Ill right!" said Douglas. "We will let it go then. be you are right. At least you are not worth the er it requires to wake you up. Will you take an er to the note you brought me?"

low the returns are coming in," said Mickey. ; but she is in the big stores shopping."

ll find out," said Douglas.

picked up the telephone and called the Winton resi-:; on learning Leslie was still away, he left a request she call him when she returned.

would spend the time talking with you," he said ickey, "if I could seem to accomplish anything; can't, I'll go on with my work. You busy yourwith anything around the rooms that interests

ckey grinned half abashed. He took a long survey room they were in, arose and standing in the door ig to the next he studied that. To him "busy" meant

Presently he went into the hall and returned with d broom and dust pan he had secured from the jani-He carefully went over the floor, removing anything uld see that he thought should not be there, and then on the room adjoining. Next he appeared with a and dusted the furniture and window seats. Once et Douglas' eye and smiled. "Your janitor didn't

have much of a mother," he commented. "I could be him to his base a rod."

"Job is yours any time you want it."

"Morning papers," carrolled Mickey. "Sterilized, d dorized, vulcanized. I like to sell them—"

Defeated again Bruce turned to his work and Mickey his. He straightened every rug, pulled a curtain, and a blind at an angle that gave the worker more light a better air, and was investigating the state of the glass wh the telephone rang.

"Hello, Leslie! It certainly was! How did you do Not so hilarious as you might suppose. Leslie, I w to say something, not for the wire. Will you hold the a second until I start Mickey with it? All right!

"She is there now, Mickey. Can you find your way "Sure!" laughed Mickey. "If you put the address

Douglas turned to the telephone.

"Leslie!" he said, "I'm sending Mickey back to you with a note, not because I had anything to say I couldn't say now, but because I can't manage him. I pretended I didn't care, and let him go. Can't you help me? See if you can't interest him in something that at least will bring him back, or show us where to find him. Certainly! Thank you very much!"

When Mickey delivered the letter the lovely young woman just happened to be in the hall. She told him to come in until she read it, and learned what Mr. Bruce wanted. Mickey followed into a big room, looked around, and a speculative, appreciative gleam crossed his face. He realized the difference between a home and a show room. He did not know what he was seeing or why it affected him as it did. Really the thought that was in his mind was that this woman was far more attractive, but had less money to spend on her home, than many others. He missed the glitter, but enjoyed the comfort, for he leaned back against the chair offered him, and thought what a cool, restful place it was. The girl seemed in no hurry to open the letter.

"Have trouble finding Mr. Bruce?" she asked.

"Easy! I'd been to the same building before."

"And I suppose you'll be there many times again," she suggested.

"I'm going back right now, if you want to send an answer to that letter," he said.

"And if it requires none?" she questioned.

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"Then I'm going to try to sell the rest of these papers, d get a slate for Lily and go home."

"Is Lily your little sister?" she asked.

Mickey straightened and firmly closed his lips. He had ne it again.

'Just a little girl I know," he said cautiously.

"A little bit of a girl?" she asked.

"Bout the littlest girl you ever saw," said Mickey unasciously interested in the subject.

'And you are going to take her a slate to draw pictures? How fine! I wish you'd carry her a package for me,

b. I was arranging my dresser this morning and I t the ribbons I don't want into a box for some child.

aybe Lily would like them for her doll."

"Lily hasn't any doll," he said. "She had one, but r granny sold it and got drunk on the money."

Mickey stopped suddenly. In a minute more he would

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out waiting for a reply she left the room and preseturned with a box and a doll that seemed to quite as large as Peaches. It had a beautiful ir, real hair that could be combed, and real clothes all be taken off. Leslie had dressed it for a birther for the little daughter of one of her friends; but ing haste she could prepare another. Mickey gazed derment. He had seen dolls, even larger and more ful than that, in the shop windows, but connecting reation with his room and Peaches required mental nents.

ess you better not," he said with conviction.

why not?" asked Leslie in amazement.

I for 'bout fifty reasons," replied Mickey. "You is a poor kid, and her back is bad, and that doll is he couldn't dress it without getting all tired out; at's the use showing her such dresses, when she we any herself. She's got the best she ever had, best she can have right now; so that ain't the a doll for Lily—it's too big—and too—too glad-

e," laughed Leslie. "Well Mickey, you show me ould be the right size of a doll for Lily, and I'll ther, and dress it as you say. How would that

needn't!" said Mickey. "Lily is happy now." wouldn't she *like* a doll?" persisted Leslie. "I new a girl who didn't love a doll. Wouldn't she oll. Mickey?"

"'Most to death I 'spect," said Mickey. "I know said she cried for the one her granny sold, 'til she beat h Yes I guess she'd *like* a doll; but I can get her one."

"But you can't make white nighties for Lily to put it to take to bed with her, and cunning little dresses morning, and a street dress for afternoon, and a pa dress for evening," tempted the girl.

"Lily has been on the street twice, and she never he of a party. Just nighties and the morning dress would and there's no use for me to be sticking. If you like give away dolls, Lily might as well have one, for sh just—I don't know what she would do about it," c ceded Mickey.

"All right," said Leslie. "I'll dress it this afternous and to-morrow you can come for it in the evening fore you go home. If I am not here, the package will be the character of the said the character of the said the character of the said the sai

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"Why I haven't read it yet!" cried the girl.

"No! A-body can see that some one else is rustling for your grub!" commented Mickey.

"That's so too," laughed Leslie. "Darling old Daddy!"

"Just about right is he?" queried Mickey, interestedly.

"Just exactly right!" said Leslie.

"Gur-ur-and!" said Mickey. "Some of them ain't so ell fixed! And he that wrote the note, I guess he's sout as fine as you make them, too!"

"He's just a little the finest of any man I ever have nown, Mickey!" said the girl earnestly.

"Barring Daddy?" suggested Mickey.

"Not barring anybody!" cried she. "Daddy is lovely, it he's Daddy! Mr. Bruce is different!"

"No letter?" questioned Mickey, rising.

"None!" said the girl. "Come to-morrow night.

ou are sure Lily is so very little, Mickey?"

"You wouldn't call me big, would you?" he asked. Well! I can lift her with one hand! Such a large doll that would be tiring and confusing. Please make Lily's ore like she's used to. See?"

"Mickey, I do see!" said Leslie. "I beg your pardon. It's doll shall not tire her and it will not make her scontented with what she has. Thank you very much ra good idea for use in future giving."

Mickey returned to the street a little after noon, with ore in his pocket than he usually earned in a day, and y expert work soon disposed of his last paper. He sught the slate and hurried home carrying it and the

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ox, and at the grocery carefully selected food again. Then he threw open his door and achieved this:

> "Once a little kid named Peaches, Swelled my heart until it eatches. If you think I'd trade her for a dog, Your think-tank has slipped a cog!"

Peaches laughed and stretched both hands as usual. Aickey stooped for her caress, and as he arose scattered he ribbons over her. She gasped in delighted amazement and caught both hands full.

"Oh! Mickey! Where did you ever? Mickey, where id you get them? Mickey, you didn't st-?"

"You just better choke on that, Miss!" yelled Mickey. No I didn't st—! And I don't st—! And nothing ever bring you will be st—! And you needn't ever ut no more st's—at me. See?"

"Mickey I didn't mean that! Course I know woll

Peaches looked at him reproachfully.

"Course there wouldn't be but one I'd want to do first of all," she said. "Hold my hand tight, and big and plain up at the top make it write, 'Mickey-lovest."

"Sure," said the boy in a hushed voice. He gripped the hand and bent above her, but suddenly collapsed, buried his face in her hair and sobbed until he shook.

Peaches crouched down and lay rigid. She was badly frightened. At last she could endure it no longer.

"Mickey!" she gasped. "Mickey, what did I do? Mickey, don't write it if you don't want to!"

Mickey arose and wiped his face on the sheet.

"You just bet I want to write that, Lily!" he said. "I never wanted to do anything more in all my life!"

"Then why----?" she began.

"Never you mind 'why' Miss!" said Mickey.

Grasping her hand, he traced the words. Peaches looked at them a long time, and carefully laid the slate aside. Then she began fingering the ribbons.

"Let me wash you," said Mickey, "and rub your back to rest you from all this day, and then I'll comb your hair and you pick the prettiest one, and I'll put it on the way the showed me, and you'll be a fash'nable lady."

"Who showed you Mickey, and gave you such pretties?"

"A girl I carried a letter to. After you're bathed and have had supper I'll tell you."

Then Mickey began work. He sponged Peaches, rubbed her back, laid her on his pallet and put fresh sheets on her bed and carefully prepared her supper. After she had

ten he again ran the comb through her ringlets and told er to select the ribbon he should use.

"No you!" said Peaches.

Mickey squinted, so exacting was the work of deciding ed he discarded with one sweep against her white cheeks; reen went with it; blue almost made him shudder, but a oft warm pink pleased him, so Mickey folded it into the ands in which it had been creased before, and bound it round Peaches' head as Leslie had shown him, and with wkward fingers did his best on a big bow. He crossed he room and from the wall picked a little mirror and held before her reciting: "Once a little kid named Peaches, welled my heart—"

Peaches took the mirror and studied the face intently.
he glanced over her shoulder and Mickey piled the pilws higher. Then she looked at him. Mickey bent and

one and drawn a chair beside the bed, to see if she had arned her lesson for the day, it was cool evening. She new all the words he had given her, so he proceeded to rite them on the slate, and then told her about the big an named Douglas Bruce and the lovely girl named Leslie inton, and every word he could remember about the suse she lived in and then he added: "Lily, do you like to surprised better or do you like to think things over?" "I don't know," said Peaches.

"Well, before long, I'll know," said Mickey. "What was thinking was this: you are going to have something. just wondered whether you'd rather know it was coming, have me walk in with it and surprise you."

"Mickey, you just walk in," she decided.

"All right!" said Mickey.

"Mickey, write on the other side of my slate what you uid at the door to-night," she coaxed. "Get a little book n' write 'em all down. Mickey, I want to learn all I them, when I c'n read. Lemme tell you. You make I you c'n think of. Nen make more. An' make 'em, n' make 'em! An' when you get big as you're goin' to e, make books of 'em, an' be a poet-man 'stead of sellin' apers."

"Sure!" said Mickey. "I'd just as lief be a poet-man not! I'd write a big one all about a little yellow-haired rl named Lily Peaches, and I'd put it on the front page the *Herald!* Honest I would! I'd like to!"

"Gee!" said Peaches. "You go on an' grow hel—wope! mean hurry! Hurry an' grow up!"

CHAPTER VI

THE SONG OF A BIRD

"Are you sure that they didn't go through the same 'good time' you e having right now, before they lost the men they loved and married, d became mothers who later deliberately orphaned their own children?" Leslie.

ESLIE," said the voice of Mrs. James Minturn over the telephone, "is there any particular time of the day when that bird of yours sings better an at another?"

"Morning, Mrs. Minturn; five, the latest. At that ne one hears the full chorus, and sees the perfect heauty. ou're not figuring on really going in one of those places, are you?" questioned Mrs. Minturn.

urely!" cried Leslie. "The birds won't sing to an nobile. And you wouldn't miss seeing such flowers eir stems as you saw at Lowry's for any money. It e something to tell your friends about."

end what I should have. I'd ride a llama through of champagne for a new experience."

s. Minturn turned from the telephone with a contuous sneer on her face; but Leslie's gay laugh perin her ears. Restlessly she moved through her rooms ing what she might do to divert herself, and shrinking all the tiresome things she had been doing for years there was not a drop of the fresh juice of life to be exed from them.

m going to take a bath, go to bed early and see if I leep," she muttered. "I don't know what it is that s is contemplating, but his face haunts me. Really, doesn't be more civil, and stop his morose glowering I do see him, I'll put him or myself where we won't in contact. He makes it plain every day that he es me about Elizabeth. Why should he? He n't possibly know of the call of that wild-eyed re
r. So unfortunate that she should come just at that too! Of course hundreds of children die from spoiled every summer, the rich as well as the poor. I'll get over regretting that I didn't finish what I d to do; but I'd scarcely touched her in her life. Iways was so pink and warm, and that awful white-

ess chilled me to the soul. I wish I had driven, forced nyself! Then I could defy James with more spirit. hat's what I lack—spirit! Maybe this trip to the swamp rill steady my nerves! Something must be done soon, and I believe, actually I believe he is thinking of doing the steady with the swamp rill steady my nerves! Pooh! What could he do? There isn't an irregularity in my life he can lay his fingers on!"

She rang for her maid and cancelling two engagements or the evening, went to bed, but not to sleep. When he was called early in the morning, she gladly arose, and was dressed in Leslie Winton's short skirts, a waist of haki, and high shoes near enough her size to be comfortble. Her bath had refreshed her, a cup of hot coffee stimlated her, and despite the lack of sleep she felt better han she had that spring as she went down to the car. On he threshold she met her husband. Evidently he had seen out all night and on strengous business. His face

for a hint that you have a soul, I'd freeze it for all time with the contents of this package."

"A threat? You to me?" she cried in amazement.

"Verily, Madam," he said. "I wish you all the joy of the birds and the flowers this morning."

"You've gone mad!" she cried.

"Contrarily, I have come to my senses after years of insanity," he said. "I will see you when you return."

She stood bewildered and watched him go down the hall and enter his library. That and his sleeping room were the only places in the house sacred to him. No one entered, no one touched anything there; not even the incorrigible children. She slowly went to the car, trying to rally to Leslie's greeting, struggling to fix her mind on anything pointed out to her as something she might enjoy.

At last she said: "I don't know what is the matter with me Leslie. James is planning something, I haven't an idea what; but his grim, reproachful face is slowly driving me wild. I'm getting so I can't sleep. You saw him come home as I left. He talked positively crazy, as if he had the crack of doom in his hands and were prepared to crack it. He said he 'would see' me when I came back. Indeed he will—to his sorrow! He will be as he used to be, or we will separate. The idea, with scarcely a cent to his name, of him undertaking to dictate to me, to me! Do you blame me Leslie? You heard him the other day! You know how he insulted me!"

Leslie leaned forward and laid a firm hand in a grip on Irs. Minturn's arm.

"Since you ask me," she said, "I will answer. If you nd life with Mr. Minturn insufferable, an agony to both you, I would separate, and speedily. If it has come to be place where you can't see each other or speak without alling into unpleasantness, then I'd keep apart."

"That is exactly the case!" cried Mrs. Minturn. "Ol

eslie, I am so glad you agree with me!"

"But I haven't finished," said Leslie, "you interrupted to in the middle. If you are absolutely sure you can't go in peaceably, I would stop; but if I once had loved a man nough to give my life and my happiness into his keeping, o make him the father of my children, I would not separate from him, until I had exhausted every resource, to see I couldn't in some possible way end with credit."

"If you had been through what I have " said Mrs Min-

fine brain, unimpeachable character, who handles big affairs for other men, and father says he believes his bank account would surprise you. He has been in business for years; surely all he makes doesn't go to other men."

"You know I never thought of that!" cried Mrs. Minturn. "He had nothing to begin on and I've always kept our establishment; he's never paid for more than his clothing. Do you suppose that he has made money?"

"I know that he has!" said Leslie. "Not so fast as he might! Not so much as he could, for he is incorruptible; but money, yes! He is a powerful man, not only in the city, but all over the state. Some of these days you're going to wake up and find him a Senator, or Governor. You seem to be the only person who doesn't know it, or who doesn't care if you do. But when it comes about, and it will, you'll be so proud of him! Dear Mrs. Minturn, please, please go slowly! Don't, oh don't let anything happen that will make a big regret for both."

"Leslie, where did you get all this?" asked Mrs. Minturn in tones of mingled interest and surprise.

"From my father!" answered Leslie. "And from Douglas Bruce. Douglas' office is just across the hall from Mr. Minturn's; they meet daily, and from the first they have been friends. Mr. Minturn took Douglas to his clubs and introduced him and helped him into business, and often they work together. Why only yesterday Douglas came to me filled with delight. Mr. Minturn secured an appointment for him to make an investigation for the city, and it will be a great help to Douglas. It will

bring him in contact with prominent men, give him big work and a sample of how mercenary I am—it will bring him big pay and he knows how to use the money in a big way. Douglas knows Mr. Minturn so well, and respects him so highly, yet no one can know him as you do——"

"That is quite true! I live with him! I know the

real man!" cried Mrs. Minturn.

"How mean of you!" laughed Leslie, "to distort my reasoning like that! I don't ask you to think up all the little things that have massed into one big grievance against him; I mean stop that for to-day, out here in the country where everything is so lovely, and get back where I am."

"He surely has an advocate! Leslie, when did you start

making an especial study of Mr. Minturn?"

"When Douglas Bruce began speaking to me so frequently of him!" answered Leslie. "Then I commenced to watch him and listen to what people were saving about divorced woman is always—well, it's disagreeable. Alone you'd feel stranded. Attempt marrying again, and where would you find a man with half the points that count for good, to replace him? In after years when your children realize the man he is, how are you going to explain to them why you couldn't live with him?"

"From your rush of words, it is evident you have your arguments at hand," said Mrs. Minturn. "You've been thinking more about my affairs than I ever did. You bring up points I never have thought of, and make me see things that would not have occurred to me; yet as you put them, they have awful force. You haven't exactly said it, but what you mean is that you believe me in the wrong, and so do all my friends; all of you sympathize with Mr. Minturn! All of you think him a big man worthy of every consideration and me deserving none."

"You're putting that too strong," retorted Leslie. "You are right about Mr. Minturn; but I won't admit that I find you 'worthy of no consideration at all,' or I wouldn't be here, literally imploring you to give yourself a chance at happiness."

"'Give myself a chance at happiness!""

"Dear Mrs. Minturn, yes!" said Leslie. "All your life to far, you have lived absolutely for yourself; for your personal pleasure. Has happiness resulted?"

"You little fool! With my husband practically a madman, my children incorrigible, my nerves on edge until I can't sleep, because one thought comes over and over." "Well you achieved it in society!" said Leslie. 'the result of doing exactly what you wanted to! You say James Minturn was to blame for what you had money and the desire to do. You can't think your b wouldn't have preferred their mother to the nurses governesses they have had—"

"If you say another word about that I'll jump the car and break my neck," threatened Mrs. Min "I don't care if I do! I'm the most miserable wo

alive! No one sympathizes with me!"

"That is untrue," said Leslie, renewing her grip to sure and to stop the jumping if it really impended. " is not true! I care, or I wouldn't be doing what now. And as for sympathy, I haven't a doubt but a woman of your especial set will weep tears of condo with you, if you'll tell them what you have me. Th live extravagantly as they choose, to dress faultlessly as they have taste, freedom to go as they please! Oh they do have a good time!"

"Are you sure that they didn't go through the same 'good time' you are having right now, before they lost the men they loved and married and became mothers who later deliberately orphaned their own children?"

"Leslie, for God's sake where did you learn it?" cried Mrs. Minturn. "How can you hit like that? You make me feel like a—like a—! Oh Lord!"

"Don't let's talk any more, Mrs. Minturn," suggested Leslie. "You know what all educated, refined, home-loving, home-keeping people think. You know society and what it has to offer. You're making yourself unhappy, and I am helping you, doing most of it perhaps, but if some one doesn't tell you, if some one doesn't stop you, you may lose the love of a good man, and the respect of the people worth while, and later of your own children! See, here is the swamp and this is as close as we can go with the car."

"Is this where you found the flowers for your basket?"
"Yes." said Leslie.

"No snakes, no quicksands?"

"Snakes don't like this kind of moss," answered Leslie; "this is an old lake bed grown up with tamaracks and the bog of a thousand years."

"Looks as if ten thousand might come closer!"

"Were you ever in such a place?" asked Leslie.

"Never!" said Mrs. Minturn.

"Well to do this to perfection," said Leslie, "we should of far enough for you to see the home life of our rarest wild owers and to get the music full effect. We must look for a ligh place and spread this waterproof sheet I have brought ong, and nestle down and keep still. The birds will be us going in, but if we move quietly as possible and take ourselves inconspicuous, they will soon forget us. lave you the score?"

"Yes," answered Mrs. Minturn. "Go ahead!"

Leslie had not expected Mrs. Minturn's calm tones and lacid acceptance of the swamp. The girl sent one searching look the woman's way, then came enlightenment. This as a stunt. Mrs. Minturn had been doing stunts in the ope of new sensations all her life. What others could be, she could, if she chose; and in this instance she chose openetrate a tamarack swamp at six o'clock in the oping to listen to the potes of a bird.

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edly plunged after Leslie. Purposely the girl went y, stooping beneath branches, skirting too wet places, ing soundlessly over the high hummocks, sometimes ng to indicate by a gesture a moss bed, a flower, a emerald vista, or glancing upward to try to catch a use of some entrancing musician.

ce Leslie turned to look back and saw Mrs. Minturn er knees separating the silvery green moss heads and ting her hand deeply to learn the length of the roots. noticed the lady's absorbed face, and the wet patches iding around her knees. Leslie fancied she could see Minturn entering the next gathering of her friends, ng faintly and crying: "Dear people, I've had a pernew experience!" She could hear every tone of Minturn's voice saying: "Ferns as luxuriant as anyin Florida! Moss beds several feet deep. birds singing, and all before sunrise, my dears!" hen Mrs. Minturn arose Leslie went forward slowly she reached the moccasin flowers, but remembering, lid not stop. The woman did. She stooped and e winced as she snapped one and examined it criti-She held it up in the gray light and turned it.

Did you ever see—little Elizabeth?" she asked. (es." said Leslie.

Do you think—?" She stopped abruptly. That one is too deep," said Leslie. "The colour he was on a freshly opened one like that." he pointed to a paler moccasin of exquisite pink with avender veining. Mrs. Minturn assented.

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"He can't forget anything," she said, "or let any one lse. He always will keep harping."

"We were peculiarly unfortunate that day," said Leslie. He really had no intention of saying anything, if he adn't been forced."

"Oh he doesn't require forcing," said Mrs. Mintum. He's always at the overflow point about her."

"Perhaps he was very fond of her," suggested Leslie.

"He was perfectly foolish about her," said Mrs. Minurn impatiently. "I lost a nurse or two through his inerference, and when I got such a treasure as Lucette I just old her to take complete charge, make him attend his wn affairs, and not try being a nursery maid. It really on't done these days!"

Leslie closed her lips and moved forward until she reached he space where the ragged boys and the fringed girls

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Irs. Minturn relaxed, made herself comfortable as possile, and turned to the orchids of the open space. The plour flushed and faded on her tired face, and several mes she nervously rolled the moccasin stem in her fingers, and looked long at the delicate flower. She was thinking intently that Leslie, who was watching her, saw she as neither seeing the swamp, nor hearing the birds.

It was then that a little gray singer straying through the tamaracks sent a wireless to his mate in the bushes of orderland, in which he wished to convey to her all here was in his heart about the wonders of spring, the joy f mating, the love of her, and their nest. He waited a second and tucking his tail, swelled his throat, and made ure he had done his best.

At the first measure, Leslie thrust the sheet before Mrs. Instantly the woman tanned the score and leaned forward listening. As the ird flew, Leslie faced Mrs. Minturn with questioning yes, and she cried softly: "He did it! Perfectly! If I adn't heard I never would have believed."

"There is another that can do this from Verdi's Travita." Leslie whistled the notes. "Get the strain in your und and we may hear him also."

Again they waited, and in a few minutes Leslie realized lat Mrs. Minturn was not listening, and would have to recalled if the bird sang. Leslie sat silent. The same rd sang, and others, but to the girl had come the inition that Mrs. Minturn was having her hour in the rden, and wisely she remained silent. After an inter-

minable time she softly arose and made her way forward as far as she could penetrate and still see the figure of the woman, and hunting an old stump, climbed upon it and did some thinking herself.

At last she returned to the motionless figure. Mrs. Minturn was leaning against the tamarack's scraggy trunk, her head resting on a branch, lightly sleeping. A rivulet staining her cheeks from each eye showed where slow tears had slipped from under her closed lids after she had been too unconscious to dry them. Leslie's heart ached with pity. She thought she never had seen any one look so sad, so alone, so punished for sins of inheritance and rearing. She sat beside Mrs. Minturn and waited until she awakened and turned.

- "Why I must have fallen asleep!" she cried.
- "For a minute," said Leslie.
- "But I feel as if I had rested soundly a whole night."

the scores you suggest, and see what we can really hear from these birds. But to-day I've got the battle of my life to fight. Something is coming; I should be in a measure prepared, and as I don't know what to expect, it takes all the brains I have to figure things out."

"You don't know, Mrs. Minturn?" asked Leslie.

"No," she said wearily. "I know James hates the life I lead, and thinks my time wasted. I know he's a disappointed man, because he thought when he married me he could cut me out of everything worth while in the world, and set me to waiting on him, and nursing his children. Every single thing I have done since, or wanted or had, has been a disappointment to him. I know now he never would have married me, if he hadn't figured he was going to make me over; shape me and my life to suit his whims, and throw away my money to please his fancies. He's been utterly discontented since Elizabeth was born. Why Leslie, we haven't lived together since then. He said if I were going to persist in bringing 'orphans' into the world, babies I wouldn't mother myself, and wouldn't allow him to father, there would be no more children. I laughed at him. because I didn't think he meant it; but he did, so that ended even a semblance of content. Half the time I don't know where he is, or what he is doing; he seldom knows where I am, and if we appear together it is accidental; I thought I had my mind made up to leave him, and soon; but what you say, coupled with doubts I had myself, have set me to thinking, and I don't know. I hate a scandal. You know how careful I always have been. All my

osest friends have jeered me for a prude; there isn't a aw he can find, there has been none! Absolutely none!" "Certainly not," said Leslie. "Every one knows that, Irs. Minturn."

"Leslie, you don't know, do you?" asked Mrs. Minturn.

He didn't say anything to Bruce, did he?"

"You want an honest answer?" questioned Leslie.

"Of course I do!" cried Mrs. Minturn.

"Douglas did tell me in connection with Mr. Minturn ining the Brotherhood and taking a gamin from the reets into his office, that he said he was scarcely allowed see his own sons, not to exercise the slightest control, he was going to try his theories on a Little Brother, ut Douglas wouldn't mention it, only to me, and of course wouldn't repeat it to any one. Mr. Minturn seemed to el that Douglas thought it peculiar for a man having

has failed you. I believe I can give you more help to-day than any woman of your age and intimate association."

"That's true Leslie, quite true!" exclaimed Mrs. Minturn eagerly. "And I need help! Oh I do!"

"You poor soul, you!" comforted Leslie. "Turn where you belong! Turn to your own blood!"

"My mother would jeer me for a weakling," said Mrs. Minturn. "She has urged me to divorce James, ever since Elizabeth was born."

"I didn't mean your mother," said Leslie. "I meant doser relatives, I meant your husband and sons."

"My husband would probably tell me he had lost all respect for me, and my sons would very likely pull my hair and kick my shins if I knelt to them for sympathy," said Mrs. Minturn. "They are perfect little animals."

"Oh Mrs. Minturn!" cried Leslie amazed. "Then you simply must take them in charge and save them; they are so fine looking, and you're their mother, you are!"

"It means giving up life as I have known it always, just about everything!" said Mrs. Minturn.

"Look at yourself now!" said Leslie. "I should think you would be glad to give up your present state."

"Leslie, do you think it wrong to gather those orchids?"

"I think it an unpardonable sin to exterminate them," answered Leslie. "If you have any reason for wanting a few, and merely gather the flowers, leaving the roots to spread and bloom another year, I should say take them."

"Will you wait in the car until I go back?" she asked.
"I will go with you," offered Leslie.

"But I wish to be alone," said Mrs. Minturn.

"You're not afraid? You won't become lost?"

"I am not afraid, and I will not lose myself," said Mrs. inturn. "Must I hurry?"

"Take all the time you want," said Leslie.

It was mid-afternoon when she returned, her hands led with a dripping moss ball in which she had emedded the stems of a big feathery mass of pink-fringed chids. Her face was flushed with tears, but her eyes ere bright, her step quick and alert.

"Leslie, what do you think I am going to do?" she ied. Then without waiting a reply, "I'm going to ask mes to go with me to take these to Elizabeth and to g him to forgive my neglect of her; and pledge the rest my life to him and the boys."

Leslie caught Mrs. Minturn in her arms. "Oh you

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You see, I never had to think about myself," said ie. "Daddy always thought for me, so there was ing left for me to spend my time and thought on but. It was a beautiful arrangement."

Leslie, this is your car, but won't you dear, drive!" begged Mrs. Minturn.

Of course Nellie!" exclaimed the girl.

Leslie, will you stand by me, and show me the way, all can?" asked Mrs. Minturn anxiously. "I'll lose y friend I have got; my house must be torn down and t up from the basement on a new system, as to mannent; and I haven't an idea how to do it. Oh I hope es will know, and can help me."

You may be sure James will know and can help "comforted Leslie. "You'll be leaving for the seae in a few days; install a complete new retinue, and n all fresh. Half the servants you keep, really comnt and interested in their work, would make you far e comfortable than you are now."

Yes, I think that too!" agreed Mrs. Minturn eagerly. me way I feel as if I were turning against Lucette. ver want to see her again, after I tell her to go; not I know what I shall do without her. The boys will ably burn down the house, and where I'll find a nan who will tolerate them, I don't know."

Employ a man until you get control," suggested Les-"They are both old enough; hire a man, and explain ou want to him, if you can't find a woman. They'd fraid of a man." "Afraid!" cried Mrs. Minturn. "They are afraid of ucette! I can't understand it. I wonder if James——!" "Poor James!" laughed Leslie. "Honestly Nellie, don't upose too much of your—your work on him. Undertake

yourself, and show him what a woman you are."

"Great Heavens, Leslie, you don't know what you are aying!" cried Mrs. Minturn. "My only hope lies in deeiving him. If I showed him the woman I am, as I saw syself back there in that swamp an hour ago, he'd take ne look, and strangle me for the public good."

"How ridiculous!" exclaimed Leslie. "Why must a roman always rush from one extreme to the other?

hoose a middle course and keep it."

"That's what I am telling you I must do," said Mrs. Inturn. "Leslie, it is wonderful how I feel. I'm almost ying. Do you honestly think it is possible that there is

dress I own, and the most becoming," she ordered. "Something white with a trace of modesty about it, if I have it. Be quick! Can't you see I'm in a hurry?"

"Mrs. Minturn, I think you will thank me for telling you there is an awful row in the library," said the maid.

"'An awful row'?" Mrs. Minturn paused.

"Yes. I think they are killing Lucette," explained the maid. "She's shrieked bloody murder two or three times."

"Who? What do you mean?" demanded Mrs. Minturn. She slipped on the bathrobe she had picked up, and stood holding it together, gazing at the maid.

"Mr. Minturn came in a few seconds ago with two men. One was a park policeman we know, and they went into the library and sent for Lucette. There she goes again!"

"Is there any way I could see, could hear, what is going on, without being seen?"

"There's a door to the den from the back hall, and that leads to the library," suggested the maid. "You'd have a chance there."

"Show me! Help me!" begged Mrs. Minturn.

As they passed the table the orchids hanging over the edge caught on the trailing robe and started to fall. Mrs. Minturn paused to push them back, then studied the flowers an instant, and catching up the bunch carried it along. She closed the den door after her without a sound, and creeping beside the wall, hid behind the door curtain and peeped into the library. There were two men who evidently were a detective and a policeman. She saw Lucette backed against the wall, her hands clenched,

r eyes wild with fear. She saw her husband's back, and the table beside him a little box, open, its wrappings ar, and its contents terrifying the woman, as no doubt would her when he turned.

"To sum up then," said Mr. Minturn in tones she never fore had heard, "I can put on oath this man, who will be reed to tell what he witnessed or be impeached by others no saw it at the same time, and are ready to testify to tat he said; I can produce the boy who came to tell me e part he took in it; I have the affidavit and have just me from the woman who interfered and followed you re in an effort to save Elizabeth; I have this piece of ork in my hands, done by one of the greatest scientists d two of the best surgeons living, and although you rink from it, I take pleasure in showing it to you are in a tiny skull now lying in a vault out at Forest

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shall have you promptly arrested and forced to answer r the cold-blooded murder of my little daughter. Live ou must, I suppose, but not longer by the torture of sildren. Go, before I strangle you as you deserve!"

How Mrs. Minturn came to be standing beside her husand, she never afterward knew; only that she was, pulling wn his arm to stare at the white cast. Then she looked p at him and said simply: "But Lucette didn't murder er: it was I. I was her mother. I knew she was beaten. knew she was abused! I didn't stop my pleasure to interre. lest I should lose a minute by having to see to her my-A woman did come to me, and a boy! I knew they ere telling the truth! I didn't know it was so bad, but I new it must have been dreadful, to bring them. I had my nance to save her. I went to her as the woman told me , and because she was quiet, I didn't even turn her over. didn't run a finger across her little head. I didn't call a irgeon. I preferred an hour of pleasure to taking the sk of being disturbed. I am quite as guilty as Lucette! ave them take me with her."

James Minturn stepped back and gazed at his wife. hen he motioned the men toward the door, and with the oman they left the room.

"Lucette just had her sentence," he said, "now for ours! Words are useless! I am leaving your house th my sons. They are my sons, and with the proof hold, you will not claim them, and if you do, you ill not get them. I am taking them to the kind of a use I deem suitable for them, and to such care as I can

possible until I see just what harm has been done, d how to remedy what can be changed. I shall provide the teachers as I see fit for them, and devote the resinder of my life to them. I am taking them and thing but them. They are mine, and before God I im them. All I ask of you is to spare them the disace of forcing me to prove my right to them, or ever ving them realize just what happened to their sister, and ur part in it."

She held the flowers toward him.

"I brought these—" she began and paused. "You uldn't believe me, if I should tell you. You are right! rfectly justified! Of course I shall not bring this before public. Go!"

At the door he looked back. She had dropped into a

CHAPTER VII

PEACHES' PREFERENCE IN BLESSINGS

"God ain't made a sweeter girl
"An Lily, 'at keeps my heart a-whirl.
If I was to tell an awful whopper,
I'd get took by the cross old copper."

Mickey.

HUS chanted Mickey at his door, his hands behind him. Peaches stretched both hers toward him as usual; but he stood still and swung in front of him a beautiful doll, for a little sick girl. A baby doll in a long snowy dress and a lace cap; it held outstretched arms, and was not heavy enough to tire small wavering hands. Peaches lunged forward and only Mickey's agility saved her from falling. He tossed the doll on the bed, and caught the child, the lump in his throat so big his voice was strained as he cried: "Why you silly thing!"

With her safe he again proffered it. Peaches shut her eyes and buried her face on his breast.

"Oh don't let me see it!" she begged. "Take it away!"

"Why Lily! I thought you'd be crazy about it," marvelled Mickey. "Honest I did! The prettiest lady sent it to you. Let me tell you!" "Giving them up is worser 'an never having them. ake it away!" wailed Peaches.

"Well Lily!" said Mickey. "I never was stuck up bout my looks, but I didn't s'pose I looked so like a granny hat you'd think that of me. Don't I seem man enough to take care of a little flowersy-girl 'thout selling her doll? here's where I got your granny skinned a mile. I don't ooze, and I never will. Mother hammered that into me. Tow look what a pretty it is! You'll just love it! I rouldn't take it! I'd lay out anybody who would. Some on now! Negotiate it! Get your flippers on it!" He was holding the child gently and stroking her umbled hair. When he put her from him to see her ace, Mickey was filled with envy because he had been orced to admit the gift was not from him. He shut his ps tight, and his face was grim as he studied Peaches'

got a big rest house, and a lover man, and an automobile I wish you could see, Lily," he said.

"If I was on the rags in the corner, I'd have this child—wouldn't I?" scoffed Peaches, still clutching the doll, but her gaze on Mickey. "What happened was, 'at she liked you for something, and give you the baby, and you brought it to me. Thank you Mickey, for this Precious Child!"

Peaches lifted her lips, and Mickey met them more obessed than before. Then she turned away and clasped
the doll. Mickey could see that the tears were slipping
from under the child's closed lids, but her lips were on the
doll face, so he knew she was happy. He stole out to
bring in his purchases for supper, and begin his evening
work. He gave Peaches a drink, and her daily rub, cleaned
the room without making dust as the nurse had shown
him, and brought water. He shook his fist at the faucet.

"Now hereafter, nix on the butting in!" he said belligerently. "Mebby I couldn't have got that doll, but I could
have got one she'd have liked just as well, and earned it
extra, in one day. There's one feature of the Big Brother
business that I was a little too fast on. He's the finest man
that ever wanted me, and his rooms are done shameful. I
could put a glitter on them so he could see himself with the
things he has to work with, and he said any time I wanted
it, the job was mine. It wouldn't be cheating him any if
I took it, and did better work than he's getting, and my
steady papers are sure in the morning, and that would be
sure in the afternoon, and if I cut ice with a buzz saw, I
might get through in time to pick up something else before

oming home, and being sure beats hoping a mile, yes tentiles! Mebby I'll investigate that business a little furter, 'cause hereafter I provide for my own family. See' ily was grand about it. Gee! she's smart to think it out not way all in a minute. But by and by she's going to ave a lot of time to think, and then she'll be remembering bout the lady I got to tell her of 'stead of me, as she would! Guess I'll run my own family! I'll take another ok at cleaning that office. There ain't any lap-dog busitess in a straight job, and being paid for it, if you do it ell."

Mickey turned the faucet and marched up the stairs ith head high and shoulders square. His face was grave hile he worked, but Peaches was so happy she did not otice. When he came with her supper she kissed the oll, and then insisted on Mickey kissing it also. Such as the state of his subjugation he commenced with

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"Began yesterday," explained Mickey. "You know I told you there was going to be a surprise. Well this is it. When the lady gave me the ribbons for you, she told me to come back to-night, and get it. Course I could a-got it myself. I would a-got it for Christmas—"

"Oh Mickey-lovest, does Christmas come here?"

"Surest thing you know!" said Mickey. "A fat stocking full of every single thing the Nurse Lady tells Santa Claus a little—a little flowersy-girl that ain't so strong yet, may have, and a big lady doll and a picture book."

"But I never had no stockings," said Peaches.

"Well you'll have by that time," promised Mickey.

"Oh Mickey, I'm so glad I want to say a prayin's 'at you found me, 'stead of some other kid!" exulted Peaches.

"Yes Miss, and that's one thing I forgot!" said Mickey. "We'll begin to-night. You ain't a properly raised lady unless you say your prayers. I know the one She taught me. To-night will be a good time, 'cause you'll be so thankful for your pretty ribbons and your baby, that you'll just love to say a real thankful prayer."

"Mickey, I ain't goin' to say prayin's! I just said I was," explained Peaches. "I never said no prayin's for granny, 'cause she only told me to when she was drunk."

"No and you never had a box of ribbons to make you look so sweet, and a baby to stay with you while I'm gone. If you ain't thankful enough for them to say your prayers, you shouldn't have them, nor any more, nor Christmas, nor anything, but just—just like you was."

MICHAEL O'HALLORAN

Peaches blinked, gasped, digested the statements, a yielded wholly.

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"I guess I'll say them," she conceded. "Mickey wl shall I?"

"To-night 'fore you go to sleep," said Mickey.

"Now tell me about the baby," urged Peaches.

"Sure! I was! I could a-got it myself, like I was t ing you; but the ones in the stores have such funny cloth They look so silly, and I knew I couldn't wash them and course they'd get dirty like everything does, and couldn't have them dirty, so I thought it over, and I s to Mickey-boy, 'if the Joy Lady is so anxious to get baby, and sew its clothes herself, why I'll just let her,' s did let her, but it took some time to make them, so I h to wait to bring it 'til to-night. I was to go to her hor after it, and when I got there she was coming home in I

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"Just by the merest chance could your name be Mickey?"

PEACHES' PREFERENCE IN BLESSINGS

en her face when the car stopped, while I was coming own the steps."

"Was she so glad to see you?" asked Peaches.

"Twasn't me!" said Mickey. "Twas on her face fore she saw me. She was just gleaming, and shining, nd spilling over joy! She isn't the kind that would dance n the street, nor where it ain't nice to dance; but she was ancing inside just the same. She pulled me right into hat big fine car, and I sat on the seat with her, and we rent sailing, and skating, and flying along and all the oys guying me, but I didn't care! I liked to ride in her ar! I never rode in a car like that before. She went -whizzing right to the office of the big man, where maybe 'll work; I guess I'll go see him to-morrow, I got a hankerng for knowing what I'm going to do, and where I'm going o do it, and since I got you, what I'm going to be paid for :. Well she went spinning there, and she said 'you wait minute,' and she ran in and pretty soon out she came ith him. His name is Mr. Douglas Bruce, and I guess it 'ould be a little closer what She'd think right if I'd use And hers he calls her by, is Leslie. Ain't that pretty? Vhen he says 'Leslie' sounds as if he kissed the name as came through. Honest it does!"

"I bet he says it just like you say 'Lily!'"

"I wonder now!" grinned Mickey. "Well he came ut and what she had told him, set him crazy too. They set talked a streak, but he shook hands with me, and he said, 'You tell the driver where to go Mickey,' and I aid, 'Go where, Miss?' and she said, 'To take you home,'

and I said, 'You don't need!' and she said, 'I'd lik and I saw she didn't care what she did, so I just sen to the end of the car line and saved my nickel, and I come on here, and both of them——"

"What?" asked Peaches eagerly.

Mickey changed the "wanted to come to see you' had been on his lips. If he told Peaches that, an asked for them to come, and they came, and then the was not taking care of her right, and took her from him—then what?

"Said good-bye the nicest," he substituted. I'm going to see if she wants any more letters carr soon as my papers are gone in the morning, and if she I'm going to take them, and if one is to him, I'm go ask him more about the job he offered me, and if w agree, I'm going to take it, and then I can buy you want myself, because I'll know every day every want myself.

them so's they can tell good friends to go to it, and kill each other, even relations."

"And do they do it?" marvelled Peaches.

"Sure they do it!" cried Mickey. "Why they are doing it right now! I could bring a paper and read you things that would make you so sick you couldn't sit up!"

"What kind of things, Mickey?"

"About kings making all the fathers kill each other, and burn down each other's houses, and blow up the cities, and eat all the food themselves, and leave the mothers with no home, and no groceries, and no stove, and no beds, and the bullets flying, and the cities burning, and no place to go, and the children starving and dying—Gee, I ain't ever going to tell you any more, Lily! It's too awful! You'd feel better not to know. Honest you would! Wish I hadn't told you anything about it at all. Where's your slate? We got to do lessons 'fore it gets so dark and we get so sleepy we can't see."

Peaches proudly handed him the slate. In wavering lines and tremulous curves ran her first day's work alone, over erasures, and with relinings, in hills and deep depressions, which it is possible Mickey read because he knew what it had to be, he proudly translated, "Mickey-lovest." Then the lines of the night before, then "cow" and "milk." And then Mickey whooped because he faintly recognized an effort to draw a picture of the cow and the milk bottle.

"Grand Lily!" he cried. "Gee, you're the smartest kid I ever knew! You'll know all I do 'fore long, and

then you'll need your back, so's you can get ready to to a Young Ladies' Sem'nary."

"What's that?" interestedly asked Peaches.

"A school. Where other nice girls go, and where learn all that I don't know to teach you," said Mickey "I won't go!" said Peaches.

"Oh yes you will, Miss," said Mickey. "'Cause you my family, and you'll do as I say."

"Will you go with me?" asked Peaches.

"Sure! I'll take you there in a big au— Oh, I de know as I will either. We'll have to save our money we both go. We'll go on a street car, and walk up a gr av'noo among trees, and I'll take you in, and see if y room is right, and everything, and all the girls will you 'cause you're so smart, and your hair's so pretty, then I'll go to a boys' school close by, and learn how

about fathers. I know a lot. I know that you are no worse off, not knowing who your father was than to know he was so mean that you are glad he's dead. Your way leaves you hoping that he was just awful nice, and got killed, or was taken sick or something; my way, there ain't no doubts in your mind. You are plumb sure he wasn't decent. Don't you bother none about fathers!"

"My I'm glad Mickey!" cried Peaches joyously.

"So am I," said Mickey emphatically. "We don't want any fathers coming here to butt in on us, just as we get your back Carreled and you ready to start to school."

"Can I go without a name Mickey?" asked Peaches.

"Course not!" said Mickey. "You have to put your name on a roll the first thing, and you must be interdooced to the Head Lady and all the girls."

"What'll I do Mickey?" anxiously inquired Peaches.

"Well, for smart as you are in some spots, you're awful dumb in others," commented Mickey. "What'll you do, saphead? Gee! Ain't you mine? Ain't you my family? Ain't my name good enough for you? Your name will be Miss Lily Peaches O'Halloran. That's a name good enough for a Queen Lady!"

"What's a Queen?" inquired Peaches.

"Wife of those kings we were just talking about."

"Sure!" said Peaches. "None of them have a nicer name than that! Mickey, is my bow straight?"

"Naw it ain't!" said Mickey. "Take the baby 'til I fix it! It's about slipped off. There! That's better."

"Mickey, let me see it!" suggested Peaches.

MICHAEL O'HALLORAN

Mickey brought the mirror and she looked so long grew tired and started to put it back, but she clung to "Just lay it on the bed," she said.

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"Naw I don't, Miss Chicken—O'Halloran!" he sa
"Mirrors cost money, and if you pull the sheet in the nigl
and slide ours off, and it breaks, we got seven years of b
luck coming, and we are nix on changing the luck we ha
right now. It's good enough for us. Think of them B
gium kids where the kings are making the fathers fig
This goes where it belongs, and you take your drink, a
let me beat your pillow, and you fix your baby, and the
we'll say our prayers, and go to sleep."

Mickey replaced the mirror and carried out the progr he had outlined. When he came to the prayer he orde Peaches to shut her eyes, fold her hands and repeat at him:

"" Now I law me down to cleen"

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Peaches obeyed.

"'If I should die before I wake'"——continued Mickey. Peaches' eyes flashed open and she drew back in horror. "I won't!" she cried. "I won't say that. That's what happened to granny, an' I saw. She was the awfullest, an' then—the men came. I won't!"

Mickey opened his eyes and looked at Peaches, his lips in a set line, his brow wrinkled in thought.

"Well I don't know what they went and put that in for," he said indignantly. "Scaring little kids into fits! It's all right when you don't know what it means, but when kids has been through what we have, it's different. I wouldn't say it either. You wait a minute. I can beat that myself. Let me think. Now I got it! Shut your eyes and go on:

"If I should come to live with Thee-"

"Well I ain't goin'!" said Peaches flatly. "I'm goin' to stay right here with you. I'd a lot rather than anywhere. King's house or anywhere!"

"I never saw such a kid!" wailed Mickey. "I think that's pretty. I like it heaps. Come on Peaches! Be good! Listen! The next line goes: 'Open loving arms to thelter me.' Like the big white Jesus at the Cathedral door. Come on now!"

"I won't! I'm goin' to live right here, and I don't want no big white Jesus' arms; I want yours. 'F I go anywhere, you got to lift me yourself, and let me take my Precious Child along."

"Lily, you're the worst kid I ever saw," said Mickey.

"No you ain't either! I know a lot worse than you. Yo just don't understand. I guess you better pray somethin you do understand. Let me think again. Now try this Keep me through the starry night—"

"Sure! I just love that," crooned Peaches.

"Wake me safe with sunrise bright," prompted Mickey and the child smilingly repeated the words.

"Now comes some 'Blesses,'" said Mickey. "I don know just how to manage them. You haven't a father bless, and your mother got what was coming to her lor ago; blessing her now wouldn't help any if it wasn't plea ant; same with your granny, only more recent. I'll to you! Now I know! 'Bless the Sunshine Lady for all things to make me comfortable, and bless the Moonshi Lady for the ribbons and the doll."

"Aw!" cried Peaches, staring up at him in rebellion.

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ing her, a commingling of surprise and delight on his face. Then he bent over and laid his cheek against hers.

"You fool little kid," he whispered tenderly. "You precious fool little flowersy-kid! You make a fellow love you 'til he nearly busts inside. Kiss me good-night, Lily."

He slipped the ribbon from her hair, straightened the sheets, arranged as the nurse had taught him, laid the doll as Peaches desired, and then screened by the foot of the bed, undressed and stretched himself on the floor. The same moon that peeped in the window to smile her broadest at Peaches and her Precious Child, and touched Mickey's face to wondrous beauty, at that hour also sent shining bars of light across the veranda where Leslie sat and told Douglas Bruce about her trip to the swamp.

"I never knew I could be so happy over anything in all this world that didn't include you and Daddy. But of course this does in a way; you, at least. Much as you think of, and are with, Mr. Minturn, you can't help being glad that joy has come to him at last. Why don't you say something, Douglas?"

"I have been effervescing ever since you came to the office after me, and I find now that the froth is off, I'm setting to the solid facts in the case, and, well I don't want to say a word to spoil your joyous day, but I'm worried, 'Bringer of Song.'"

"Worried?" cried Leslie. "Why? You don't think he wouldn't be pleased? You don't think he might not be—responsive, do you?"

"Think of the past years of neglect, insult and humiliation!" suggested Douglas.

"Think of the future years of loving care, reparation an

joy!" commented Leslie.

"Please God they outweigh!" said Douglas. "(course they will! It must be a few things I've seen late that keep puzzling me."

"What have you seen, Douglas?" questioned Leslie.

"Deals in real estate," he answered. "Consultation with detectives and policemen, scientists and surgeons."

"But what could that have to do with Nellie Miturn?"

"Nothing, I hope," said Douglas, "but there has been grimness about Minturn lately, a going ahead with jar set that looks ugly for what opposes him, and you tell they have been in opposition ever since they married.

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"Oh Douglas! What makes you even think of such a thing?"

"What Minturn said to me this morning with such bitterness on his face and in his voice as I never before encountered in man," Douglas answered.

"He said----?" prompted Leslie.

"This is my last day as a laughing-stock for my fellowmen! To-morrow I shall hold up my head!"

"Why didn't you tell me that before?" demanded Leslie.

"Didn't realize until just now that you and she hadn't seen him—that you were acting on presumption."

"I'm going to call her!" cried Leslie.

"I wouldn't!" advised Douglas.

"Whý not?"

"After as far as she went to-day, if she had anything she wanted you to know, wouldn't she feel free to call you?"

"You are right," conceded Leslie. "Even after to-day, for me to call would be an intrusion. Let's not talk of it further! Don't you wish we could take a peep at Mickey carrying the doll to the little sick girl?"

"I surely do!" answered Douglas. "What do you think of him, Leslie?"

"Great! Simply great!" cried the girl. "Douglas you should have heard him educate me on the doll question."

"How?" he asked interestedly.

"From the first glimpse I had of him, the thought came to me, 'That's Douglas' Little Brother!'" she explained. "When you telephoned and said you were sending him to e, just one idea possessed me: to get what you wanted. most without thought at all I tried the first thing he entioned, which happened to be a little sick neighbour I he told me about. All girls like a doll, and I had one essed for a birthday gift for a namesake of mine, and ne in plenty to fix her another. I brought it to Mickey id thought he'd be delighted."

"Was he rude?" inquired Douglas anxiously.

"Not in the least!" she answered. "Only casual! erely made me see how thoughtless and unkind and sitively vulgar my idea of pleasing a poor child was."

"Leslie, you shock me!" exclaimed Douglas.

"I mean every word of it," said the girl. "Now listers me! It is thoughtless to offer a gift headlong, without nsidering a second, is it not?"

"Merely impulsive," replied Douglas.

"Identically the same thing!" declared Leslie. "Listen said! Without a thought about suitability, I offered extremely poor child the gift I had prepared for a very thone. Mickey made me see in ten words that it would

"Aren't there though!" said Leslie. "Mickey took about three minutes to show me that Lily was satisfied as she was, and no one would thank me for awakening discontent in her heart. He measured off her size and proved to me that a small doll, that would not tire her to handle, would be suitable, and so dressed that its clothes could be washed and would be plain as her own. Even further! Once my brain began working I saw that a lady doll with shoes and stockings to suggest outdoors and walking, was not a kind gift to make a bedridden child. Douglas, after Mickey started me I arose by myself to the point of seeing that a little cuddly baby doll, helpless as she, one that she could nestle, and play with lying in bed would be the proper gift for Lily. Think of a 'newsy' making me see that! Isn't he wonderful?"

"You should have heard him making me see things!" said Douglas. "Yours are faint and feeble to the ones he taught me. Refused me at every point, and marched away leaving me in utter rout! Outside wanting you for my wife, more than anything else on earth, I wanted Mickey for my Little Brother."

"You have him!" comforted the girl. "The Lord arranged that. You remember He said, 'All men are brothers,' and wasn't it Tolstoy who wrote: 'If people would only understand that they are not the sons of some fatherland or other, nor of governments, but are sons of God'? You and Mickey will get your brotherhood arranged to suit both of you some of these days."

"Exactly!" conceded Douglas. "But I wanted Mickey

at hand now! I wanted him to come and go with To be educated with what I consider education."

"It will come yet," prophesied Leslie. "Your is are splendid! I see how fine they are! The troub this: you had a plan mapped out at which Mickey will jump. Mickey happened to have preconceived idea the subject, so he didn't jump. You wanted to be king on the throne and stretch out a royal hand," lau Leslie. "You wanted to lift Mickey to your level, with the inherent fineness in him, have him feel et love and gratitude toward you?"

"That sounds different, but it is the real truth."

"And Mickey doesn't care to be brother to king doesn't perceive the throne even; he wants you to us stand at the start that you will take, as well as give. fusing pay for tidying your office was his first in

motion, and it was May. They were passing residences where city and country met. The dwellings of people city bound, country determined. Homes where men gave so many hours to earning money, and then sped away in swift cars to train vines, prune trees, dig in warm earth and make things grow. Such men now crossed green lawns and talked fertilizers, new annuals, tree surgery, and carried gifts of fragrant, blooming things to their friends. Here the verandas were wide and children ran from them to grassy playgrounds; on them women read books and sat with embroidery hoops or visited in small groups.

"Let's move," said Leslie. "Let's coax Daddy to sell our place and come here. One wouldn't ever need go summering, it's cool and pleasant always. I'd love it! There's a new house and a lawn under old trees, to shelter playing children; isn't it charming?"

"Quite! But that small specimen seems refractory."

Leslie leaned forward to see past him. In an open door stood a man clearly silhouetted against the light. Down the steps sped a screaming boy about nine. After him ran another five or six years older. When the child saw he would be overtaken, he headed straight for the street, and as the pursuer's hand brushed him, he threw himself kicking and clawing. The elder boy hesitated, looking for an opening to find a hold. The car was half a block away when Leslie turned a white face to Douglas and gasped inarticulately. He understood something was wrong and signalled the driver to stop.

"Turn and pass those children again!" ordered Leslie. As the car went by slowly the second time, the child still ought, the boy stepped back, and James Minturn with rim face, bent under the light and by force took into his rms the twisting, fighting boy.

"Heaven help him!" cried Douglas. "Not a sign of

appy reconciliation there!"

Leslie tried to choke down her sobs.

"Oh Nellie Minturn! Poor woman!" she wailed.

"So that's what he was doing!" marvelled Douglas. A house he has built to suit himself; training his sons ersonally, with the assistance of his Little Brother. That oy was William. I see him in Minturn's office every day."

"Oh I think he might have given her a chance!" proested Leslie. "Remember how she was reared! Think that a struggle it was for her even to contemplate trying the different." "You mean Tickner, the scientist; Wills, the surgeon?"
"Yes," answered Douglas.

"But those children! Aren't they perfectly healthy?"

"They look it! Lord, Leslie!" cried Douglas, "I have it! He has made good his threat. He has frozen her soul! What you want to do is to go to her, Leslie!"

"Douglas, tell me!" she demanded.

"I can't!" said Douglas. "I may be mistaken. I think I am not, but there is always a chance! Wait!"

He leaned forward.

"Drive to the Minturn residence," he ordered.

They found a closed dark pile of stone.

"Go past that place where the children were again!"

The upper story was quiet. Outlined by veranda lights the massive form of James Minturn paced back and forth under the big trees, his hands clasped behind him, his head bowed, and he walked alone.

"Douglas, I'm going to speak to him. I'm going to tell him!" declared Leslie.

"But you're now conceding that she saw him!" Douglas pointed out. "Then what have you to tell him that she would not? If she couldn't move him with what she said, and while you don't know his side, what could you say to him?"

"Nothing," she conceded.

"Precisely my opinion," said Douglas. "Remember Leslie I am a little ahead of you in this. You know her side. I know all you have told me of her, and I know

what he has told me; and putting what I have seen, and heard at the office, and him here with the boys, in a house she would consider too plebeian for words——"

"No Douglas. No! She is changed!" cried Leslie.
"Completely changed, I tell you! She said she would wipe
Malcolm's nose and fix James' studs——"

"Mere figures of speech!" remarked Douglas.

"They meant she was ready to work with her own hands for happiness," said Leslie indignantly.

"I think she's too late!" said Douglas. "I am afraid she is one of the unhappiest women in the world to-night!"

"Douglas, it wrings my heart!" cried Leslie.

"Mine also, but what can we do?" he answered. "For ten years, she has persisted in having her way, you tell me; what could she have expected?"

"That he would have some heart," protested Leslie.

"I was afraid of that!" exclaimed Douglas. "There nay be a message there for you that will be a comfort."

"So there may be! Let's hurry!" urged the girl. There was. They found a brief, pencilled note.

DEAR LESLIE:

After to-day, it was due you to send a word. You tried so hard dear, and you gave me real joy for an hour. Then James carried out his threat and he did all to me he intended, and more than he can ever know. I have agreed to him taking full possession of the boys, and going into a home such as he thinks suitable. They will be far better of, and since they scarcely know me, they can't miss me. Before you receive this, I shall have left the city. I can't state just now where I am going or what I shall do. You can realize a little of my condition. If ever you are tired of home life and faintly tempted to neglect it for society, use me for your horrible example. Good-bye,

NELLIE MINTURN.

Leslie read this aloud.

"It's a relief to know that much," she said with a deep breath. "I can't imagine myself ever being 'faintly tempted,' but if I am, surely she is right about the 'horrible example.' Douglas, whatever did James Minturn have in that box?"

"I could tell you what I surmise, but so long as I don't know I'd better not," he answered.

"As our mutual friend Mickey would say, 'Nix on the Swell Dames,' for me!" said Leslie determinedly.

"Thank God with all my heart!" cried Douglas Bruce.

CHAPTER VIII

BIG BROTHER

"Try grin 'stead of grouch just one day and see if the whole world esn't look better before night." Mickey.

"YE no time to talk," said Douglas Bruce, as Mickey appeared the following day; "my work seems too much for one man. Can you help me?"
"Sure!" said Mickey, wadding his cap into his back ocket. Then he rolled his sleeves a turn higher, lifted as chin a trifle and stepped forward, ready for action.

is old he will not depart from it," Douglas quoted. "Mickey has been trained until he would make a good trainer himself."

In one-half the time the trip had taken the messenger boys Douglas was accustomed to employing, Mickey was back like the Gulf in the Forum, demanding "more."

"See what you can do for these rooms, until the next errand is ready," suggested Douglas.

Mickey gave the chambers a glance and began gathering up the morning papers. From them he advanced on the rugs and curtains and arrangement of furniture.

"Hand this check to the janitor," said Douglas.

Mickey started and Douglas realized that in all probability the boy would not look at it.

"And Mickey, kindly ask him if two dollars was what I agreed to pay him for my extras this week," he added.

"Sure!" said Mickey.

Douglas would have preferred "Yes sir," but "Suré!" was a permanent ejaculation decorating the tip of Mickey's tongue. The man watching closely did not fail to catch the flash of interest and the lifting of the boy figure as he paused for instructions. When he returned Douglas said casually: "While I am at it, I'll pay off my messenger tryice. Take this check to the address and bring a receipt for the amount."

Mickey's comment came swiftly: "Gee! that boy would be sore, if he lost his job!"

"Messenger Service Agency," Douglas said, busy at his desk. "No boy would lose his job."

"Oh!" exclaimed Mickey comprehendingly.

His face lighted at the information. Next he carried a equisition for books to another city official and tele-honed a neighbouring café to deliver a pitcher of lemonde and some small cakes, and handed the boy who rought the order a dime.

"Why didn't you send me for that and save your

ilver?"

"I did not think," answered Bruce. "Some one gets he tip, you might as well have had it."

"I didn't mean me have it, I meant you save it."

"Mickey," said Douglas, "you know perfectly I can't ake your time unless you accept from me what I am acustomed to paying other boys."

"Letting others bleed you, you mean," said Mickey inignantly. "Why I'd a-been glad to brought the juice

BIG BROTHER

a second glass and cake Mickey did not hesi-

pe!" he said conclusively. "A fellow's head and ork better when his stomach is running light. I n more not to load up with a lot of stuff. I eat at rhen my work is finished. She showed me that." showed you a good many things, didn't She?" e!" said Mickey. "She was my mother, and we look out for ourselves. When you got nothing but f between you and the wolf, you learn to fly, and our think-tank in running order. She knew just ras coming to me, so She showed me, and every iing She said has come, and then some!" e!" said Douglas. "A wise mother!" e!" agreed Mickey. "But I guess it wouldn't one either of us much good if I hadn't remembered ot straight on doing what she taught me." 1 are right, it wouldn't," conceded Douglas. it's where I'm going to climb above some of the ellows," announced Mickey confidently. dn't have mothers to teach them or else they did get, or think the teaching wasn't worth anything. ie, I know She was right! She always proved it! d been up against it longer than I had and She to I am going to go right along doing as She said. I'll beat them, and carry double at that!" w double, Mickey?" inquired Douglas. ey slowly shook his head.

dn't mean to say that," he explained. "That was

slip. There's a—there's something—something I'm ying to do that costs more than it does to live. I'm ound to do it, so I got to run light and keep my lamps olished for chances. What next, sir?"

"Call 9-40-X, and order my car here," said Douglas.

He bent over his papers to hide his face when from an djoining room drifted Mickey's voice in clear enunciaon and suave intonation: "Mr. Douglas Bruce desires is car to be sent immediately to the Iriquois Building."
His mental comment was: "The little scamp has rifted to street lingo when he lacked his mother to estrain him. He can speak a fairly clean grade of Eng-

"Next?" briskly inquired Mickey.

sh now if he chooses."

"Now look here," said Douglas. "This isn't a horse ace. I earn my living with my brains, not my heels.

"I haven't done it all myself, Mickey," explained Douglas. "I happened to select a father who was of an acquisitive turn of mind and he left me enough that I can have a comfortable living in a small way, from him."

"Gee! It's lucky you got the Joy Lady then!" exclaimed Mickey. "Maybe you wouldn't ever work and make anything of yourself, if you didn't have her to scratch for!"

"I always have worked and tried to make something of myself," said Douglas.

"Yes, I guess you have," conceded Mickey. "I think it shows when a man does. It just shows a lot on you."

"Thank you, Mickey! Same to you!"

"Aw, nix on me!" said Mickey. "I ain't nothing on looks! I ain't ever looked at myself enough that if I was sent to find Michael O'Halloran I mightn't bring in some other fellow."

"But you're enough acquainted with yourself that you wouldn't bring in a dirty boy with a mouth full of swearing and beer," suggested Douglas.

"Well not this evening!" cried Mickey. "On a gamble that ain't my picture!"

"If it were, you wouldn't be here!" said Douglas.

"No, nor much of any place else 'cept the gutters, alleys, and the police court," affirmed Mickey. "That ain't my style! I'd like to be—well—about like you."

"You are perfectly welcome to all I have and am," said Douglas. "If you fail to take advantage of the offer, it will be your own fault."

"Yes, I guess it will," reflected Mickey. "You gave me the chance. I am to blame if I don't cop on to it, and get in the game. I like you fine! Your work is more interesting than odd jobs on the street, and you pay like a plute. You're being worked though. You pay too much. If I work for you it would save you money to let me manage that; I could get you help and things a lot cheaper, then you could spend what you save on the Joy Lady, making her more joyous."

"You are calling Miss Winton the Joy Lady?"

"Yes," said Mickey. "Doesn't she just look it?"

"She surely does," agreed Douglas. "It's a good title. I know only two that are better. She sows happiness everywhere. What about your Lily girl and her doll?"

"Doll doesn't go. That's a Precious Child!"

be rubbed with oil, and not be jerked for a while before it's any use to begin on her back."

"And has she the milk and the oil and the kindness?"

"You just bet she has," said Mickey. "Her family tends to that. And she has got a bed, and a window, and her Precious Child, and a slate, and books."

"That's all right then," said Douglas. "Any time you see she needs anything Mickey, I'd be glad if you would tell me or Miss Winton. She loves to do kind things to little sick children to make them happier."

"So do I," said Mickey. "And Lily is my job. But that isn't robbing Miss Joy Lady. She can love herself to death if she wants to on hundreds of little, sick, cold, miserable children, in every cellar and garret and tenement of the east end of Multiopolis. The only kind thing God did for them out there was to give them the first chance at sunrise. Multiopolis hasn't ever followed His example by giving them anything."

"You mean Miss Winton can find some other child to love and care for?" asked Douglas.

"Sure!" said Mickey emphatically. "It's hands off Lily. Her family is taking care of her, and she's got all the needs right now."

"That's good!" said Bruce. "Here we unload."

They entered a building and exchanged the books they carried for others which Douglas selected with care, and returning to the office, locked them in a safe.

"Now I am driving to the golf grounds for an hour's Play," said Douglas. "Will you go and caddy for me?"

"I never did. I don't know how," answered Mickey.

"You can learn, can't you?" suggested Douglas.

"Sure!" said Mickey. "I've seen boys carrying golf ubs that hadn't enough sense to break stone right. I an learn, but my learning might spoil your day's sport."
"It would be no big price to pay for an intelligent

addy," replied Douglas.

"Mr. Bruce, what price is an intelligent caddy worth?"

"Our Scotch Club pays fifty cents a game and each can employs his own boy if he chooses. The club used to irnish boys, but since the Big Brother movement began, o many of the men have boys in their offices they are ccustomed to, and like to give a run over the hills after ne day's work, that the rule has been changed. I can imploy you, if you want to serve me."

"I'd go to the country in the car with you, every day you

"Of course you could work for me the remainder of day if you wanted to, and I could keep my old clubise caddy, but I want you. You want the ride in the intry, you want the walk, you need the change and recreon. You are not a real boy if you don't want that!"
'I'm so real, I'm two boys if wanting it counts, but it isn't!" said Mickey. "You see I got a job for evening. I promised. I'd rather do what you want than anying I ever saw or heard of, except just this. I've given word, and I'm depended on, and I couldn't give up is work, and I wouldn't, if I could. Even golf ain't in with this job that I'm on."

'What is your work Mickey?"

'Oh I ain't ever exactly certain," said Mickey. "Somenes it is one thing, sometimes it is another, but always something, and it's work for a party I couldn't disapint, not noways, not for all the golf in the world."

"You are sure?" persisted Douglas.

"Dead sure with no changing," said Mickey.

"All right then. I'm sorry!" exclaimed Douglas.

"So am I," said Mickey. "But not about the job!"
Douglas laughed. "Well come along this evening and it on. I'll be back before six and I'll run you where we i last night, if that is close your home."

"Thanks," said Mickey. "I'd love to, but you needn't ther about taking me home. I can make it if I start at ... Shall I take the things back to the café?"

"Let them go until morning," said Douglas.

"What becomes of the little cakes?"

MICHAEL O'HALLORAN

"Their fate is undecided. Have you any suggesions?"

"I should worry!" he exclaimed. "They'd fit my ocket. I could hike past the hospital and ask the unshine Lady, and if she said so, I could take them to ily. Bet she never tasted anything like them. If it's etween her and the café selling them over, s'pose she gets hem?"

Mickey's face was one big insinuating, suggestive smile.

louglas' was another.

"Suppose she does," he agreed.

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"I must wrap them," said Mickey. "Have to be areful about Lily. If she's fed dirty, wrong stuff, it will take fever and her back will get worse instead of better."

"Will a clean envelope do?" suggested Douglas.

"That would cost you two cents," said Mickey.

"No you ain't that kind of a man," continued Mickey. 'And you are just the kind of a man I'd like to be; so if the loor ain't shut, guess I'll stick around in the afternoons."

"Not all day?" inquired Douglas.

"Well you see I am in the paper business and that takes ill morning," explained Mickey. "I can always finish my first batch by noon, lots of times by ten, and from that in to six I could work for you."

"Don't you think you could earn more with me, and in the winter at least, be more comfortable?" asked Douglas.

"Winter!" cried Mickey, his face whitening.

"Yes," said Douglas. "The newsboys always look rightfully cold in winter."

"Winter!" It was a piteous cry.

"What is it, Mickey?" questioned Bruce kindly.

"You know I forgot it," he said. "I was so took up rith what I was doing, and thinking right now, that I forot a time ever was coming when it gets blue cold, and little ids freeze. Gee! I almost wish I hadn't thought of it. guess I better sell my paper business, and come with you ill day. I know I could earn more. I just sort of hate to give up the papers. I been at them so long. I've had such a good time. 'I like to sell papers!' That's the way I always start my cry, and I do. I just love to. I sell to about the same bunch every morning, and most of my men know me, and they always say a word, and I like the rush and excitement and the things that happen, and the looking for chances on the side—"

"There's messenger work in my business."

"I see! I like that! I like your work all right," said Aickey. "Gimme a few days to sell my route to the best dvantage I can, and I'll come all day. I'll come for bout a half what you are paying now."

"But you admit you need money urgently."

"Well not so urgently as to skin a friend to get itot even with the winter I hadn't thought of coming. Gee—Idon't know just what I am going to do about that."

"For yourself, Mickey?" inquired Douglas, watching

he boy intently.

"Well in a way, yes," hesitated Mickey. "There are hings to think about! Gee I got to hump myself while the un shines! If you say so, then I'll get out of the paper usiness as soon as I can; and I'll begin work for you steady t noon to-morrow. I've seen you pay out over seven to-lay. I'll come for six. Is it a bargain?"

"No," said Douglas, "it isn't! The janitor bill was for

"And I to you Mickey," said Douglas Bruce, holding out his hand. "Have it as you will. Friends, then! Look for you at noon to-morrow. Now we play. Hop in and we'll run to my rooms and get my clubs."

"Shall I sit up with your man?" asked Mickey.

"My friends sit beside me," said Douglas.

Mickey leaned forward and spoke softly.

"Yes, but if I watched him sharp, maybe I could get the hang of driving for you, and just think what a lump that would save you," he said. "When I'm going, I'd love to drive, just for the fun of it."

"And I wouldn't allow you to drive for less than I pay him," said Douglas.

"I don't see why!" exclaimed Mickey.

"When you grow older and know me better, you will," suggested Douglas.

While the car was running its smoothest, while the country Mickey had not seen save on rare newsboy excursions, flashed past, while the wonder of the club house, the links, and the work he would have loved to do developed, he shivered and cried in his tormented little soul: "Gee, how will I ever keep Lily warm?" Douglas noticed his abstraction and wondered. He had expected more appreciation of what Mickey was seeing and doing; he was coming to the realization that he would find out what was in the boy's heart in his own time and way.

On the home run, when Douglas reached his rooms, he told the driver to take Mickey to the end of the car line; the boy shyly interposed to ask if he might go to

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the "Star of Hope Hospital," so Douglas changed to order.

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Mickey's passport held good at the hospital. The Su shine Nurse inspected the cakes and approved them. S was so particular she even took a tiny nibble of one a said, "Sugar, flour, egg and shortening—all right Micke those can't hurt her. And how is she to-day?"

"Fine!" cried Mickey. "She is getting a lot strong already. She can sit up longer and help herself bett and she's got ribbons, the prettiest you ever laid eyes of that a lady gave me for her hair, and they make her pi and nicer; and she's got a baby doll in long clean wh dresses to snuggle down and stay with her all day; and she got a slate, and a book, and she knows 'cow' and 'mi and my name, and to-day she is learning 'bread.' I morrow I am going to teach her 'baby,' and she can say I

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stars and the sun, so she knows them, and I just shifted the old sad, scary lines to:

"Guard me through the starry night, Wake me safe with sunshine bright!"

"But Mickey, that's lovely!" cried the nurse. "Wait till I write it down! I'll teach it to my little people. Half of them come here knowing that prayer and when they are ill, they begin to think about it. Some of them are old enough to worry over it. Why you're a poet, Mickey!"

"Sure!" conceded Mickey. "That's what I'm going to be when I get through school. I'm going to write a poetry piece about Lily for the first sheet of the *Herald* that'll be so good they'll pay me to write one every day, and all of them will be about her."

"But Mickey, is there enough of such a little girl to furnish one every day?" asked the nurse.

"Surest thing you know!" cried Mickey enthusiastically. "Why there are the hundred gold rings on her head, one for each; and her eyes, tender and teasy, and sad and glad, one for each; and the colour of them different a dozen times a day, and her little white face, and her lips, and her smile, and when she's good, and when she's bad; why Miss, there's enough of Lily for a book big as Mr. Bruce's biggest law book."

"Well Mickey!" cried the girl laughing. "There's no question but you will write the poetry, only I can't reconcile it with the kind of a hustler you are. I thought poets were languid, dreamy, up-in-the-clouds kind of people."

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So they are," explained Mickey. "That comes later. It I got to hustle to get Lily's back Carreled and through school, and ready to write the poetry; then ill take so much dreaming to think out what is nicest ut her, and how to say it best, that it would make any ow languid—you can see how that would be!"

Yes, I see!" conceded the nurse. "Mickey, I really ik you'll do it. And by Carreling her back, do you in Dr. Carrel?"

Sure!" cried Mickey. "You see I read a lot about in the papers I sell. He's the biggest man in the ld! He's bigger than emperors and kings! They the biggest thing they can do is to kill all their strong-bravest men. He's so much bigger than kings, that an take men they shoot to pieces and put them together in. Killing men ain't much! Anybody can do killing! I k at him making folks live! Gee, he's big!" And you think he can make Lily's back better?"

Why I know he can!" said Mickey earnestly. "That aldn't be a patching to what he has done! Soon as you

tary opens the mail and decides what is important, and that way the big people don't always know about the ones they would answer if they were doing it. He's been here in this very hospital; I've seen him operate once. Next time a perfectly wonderful case comes in, that is in his peculiar line, no doubt he will be notified and come again. Then if I could get word to you, and you could get Lily here, possibly—just possibly he would listen to you and look at her—of course I can't say surely he would—but I think he would!"

"Why of course he would!" triumphed Mickey. "Of course he would! He'd be tickled to pieces! He'd just love to! Any man would! Why a white little flowersy-girl who can't walk——!"

"If you could reach him, I really think he would," said the nurse positively.

"Well just you gimme a hint that he's here, and see if I don't get to him," said Mickey. "Sure I will! Of Ourse he'll fix her!"

"Is there any place I'd be certain to find you quickly, if a chance should come?" she asked. "One never can tell. He might not be here in years, and he might be called, and come, to-morrow."

"Why yes!" cried Mickey. "Why of course! Why the telephone! Call me where I work!"

"But I thought you were a 'newsy'!" said the nurse.

"Well I was," explained Mickey lifting his head, "but I've give up the papers. I've graduated. I'm going to sell out to-morrow. I'm going to work permanent for Mr.

ouglas Bruce. He's the biggest lawyer in Multiopolis, d he's got an office in the Iriquois Building, and his ll is 500-X. Write that down too and put it where you n't lose it. He's just a grand man. He asked about ly to-day. He said any time he'd do things for her. re he would! He'd stop saving the taxpayers of Mulpolis, and take his car, and go like greased lightning for ittle sick girl. He's the grandest man and he's got a loy dy that puts in most of her time making folks happy. ther of them would! Why it's too easy to talk about! You ll me, I take a car and bring her scooting! If I'd see Lily anding on her feet, stepping right out like other folks, I'd be happy I'd almost bust wide open. Honest I would! If he es come, you'd try hard to get me a chance, wouldn't you?" "I'd try as hard for you as I would for myself Mickey; couldn't promise more," she said.

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"Well go hop it!" she laughed. "I can't spare more time now, but I won't forget, Mickey; and if he comes I'll keep him till you get here, if I have to chain him."

"You go to it!" cried Mickey. "And I'll begin praying that he comes soon, and I'll just pray and pray so long and so hard, the Lord will send him quick to get rid of being asked so constant. No I won't either! Well wouldn't that rattle your slats?"

"What, Mickey?" asked the nurse.

"Why don't you see?" cried Mickey.

"No, I don't see," admitted the girl.

"Well I do!" said Mickey. "What would be square about that? Why that would be asking the Lord to make maybe some other little girl so sick, the Carrel man would be sent for, so I'd get my chance for Lily. That ain't business! I wouldn't have the cheek! What would the Lord think of me? He wouldn't come in a mile of doing it. I wouldn't come in ten miles of having the nerve to ask him. I do get up against it 'til my head swims. And there is winter coming, too!"

The nurse put her arm around Mickey again, and gently propelled him toward the elevator.

"Mickey," she said softly, her lips nipping his fair hair, "God doesn't give many of us your clear vision and your big heart. I'd have asked him that, with never a thought of who would have to be ill to bring Dr. Carrel here. But I'll tell you. You can pray this with a clean conscience: you can ask God if the doctor does come, to put it into his heart to hear you, and to examine Lily. That wouldn't

asking ill for any one else so that you might profit by it.

nd dear laddie, don't worry about winter. This city is
ill taking care of its taxpayers. You do your best for
ly all summer, and when winter comes, if you're not
ted for it, I will see what your share is and you can have
in a stove that will burn warm a whole day, and lots
coal, plenty of it. I know I can arrange that."
"Gee, you're great!" he cried. "This is the biggest

"Gee, you're great!" he cried. "This is the biggest ing that ever happened to me! I see now what I can k Him on the square; so it's business and all right; and r. Bruce or Miss Leslie will loan me a car, and if you see out the stove and the coal the city has for me"—in came ickey's royal flourish—"why dearest Nurse Lady, Lily as good as walking right now! Gee! In my place ould you tell her?"

"I surely would," said the nurse. "It will do her good.
will give her hope. Dr. Carrel isn't the only one who

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angel bright to sew them for her, I'm crazy over them, but I wash them. Mother showed me. That will be my share. I can do it fine. And they will be better! She's so lost in mother's, I have to shake them to find her!"

They laughed together and Mickey sped to the side-walk and ordered the car back.

"I've been too long," he said. "Nurse Lady had some things to tell me about a little sick girl and I was glad to miss my ride for them. Mr. Bruce will be ready by now. You go where he told you."

"I got twenty-seven minutes yet," said the driver.
"I can take you at least almost there. Hop in."

"Mither o' Mike!" cried Mickey. "Is that all there is to it? Gee, how I'd like to have a try at it."

"Are you going to be in Mr. Bruce's office from now on?" asked the driver.

"If I can sell my paper line," answered Mickey.

"Got a good route?" inquired the man.

"Best of any boy in my district," said Mickey. "I like to sell papers. I got it down fine!"

"I guess you have," said the driver. "I know your voice, and everybody on your street knows that cry. Your route ought to be worth a fair price. I got a kid that wants a paper start. What would you ask to take him over your round and tell the men you are turning your business over to him, and teach him your cries?"

"Hum-m-m-m!" said Mickey. "My cry is whatever has the biggest headlines on the front page, mixed in with a lot of joyous fooling, and I'd have to see your boy 'fore

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say if I could teach him. Is he a clean kid with a joys face, and his anatomy decorated with a fine large mp? That's the only kind that gets my job. I won't ve my nice men made sore all day 'cause they start it seeing a kid with a boiled-owl face."

"You think a happy face sells most papers?"

'Know it!" said Mickey, "'cause I wear it on the job, d I get away with the rest of them three times and com. Same everywhere as with the papers. A happy face uld work with your job, if you'd loosen up a link or two, d tackle it. It may crack your complexion, if you start a violent, but taking it by easy runs and greasing the ys'fore you cut your cable, I believe you'd survive it!"

Mickey flushed and grinned in embarrassment when ople half a block away turned to look at his driver, and a boy's mouth opened as a traffic policeman smiled in anothy, when he waved his club, signalling them to

"Don't you think it," called Mickey. "If you like your job, man, cotton up to it; chuckle it under the chin, and get real familiar. See? Try grin, 'stead of grouch just one day and watch if the whole world doesn't look better before night."

"Thanks kid, I'll think it over!" promised the driver.

Mickey hurried home to Peaches. He hid the cake and the hospital box under the things he bought for supper and went to her with empty hands. He could see she was tired and hungry, so he gave her a drink of milk, and clearing the bed, with the exception of the Precious Child which had to be left, he proceeded to the sponge bath and oil rub. These rested and refreshed her so that Mickey demanded closed eyes, while he slipped the dainty night-robe over her head, and tied the pink ribbon on her curls. Then he piled the pillows, leaned her against them and brought the mirror.

"Now open your peepers, Flowersy-girl, and tell me how Miss O'Halloran strikes you!" he exulted.

Peaches took one long look. She opened her mouth. Then she stared at Mickey and shut her mouth; shut it and clapped both hands over it; so that he saw the very act of strangling a phrase he would have condemned.

"That's a nice lady!" he commented in joy. "Now let me tell you! You got four of these gorgeous garments, each one made by a different nurse-lady, while she was resting. Every day you get a clean one, and I wash the one you wore last, careful and easy not to tear the lacy places. Ain't they the gladdest rags you ever saw!"

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Peaches gasped: "Mickey, I'll bust!"

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"Go on and bust then!" conceded Mickey. "Bust if you must; but don't you dare say no words that ain't for he ladiest of ladies, in that beautiful, softy, white dress."

Peaches set her lips and stretched her arms widely. She at straighter than Mickey ever had seen her, and lifted her head higher. Gradually a smile crept over her face. She was seeing a very pinched, white little girl, with a shower of yellow curls bound with a pink ribbon tied in a big bow; wearing a dainty night dress with a fancy yoke un with pink ribbons tied under her chin and at her albows. She crooked an arm, primped her mouth, and beered at the puffed sleeves, then hastily gulped down whatever she had been tempted to say.

Again Mickey approved. Despite protests he removed he mirror and put the doll in her arms. "Now you line to "Now you look alike! After you get your

"Mickey, you forgot my po'try piece to-night!" she inerposed hastily.

"What you want a poetry piece for with such a dress ind ribbon as you got?" he demanded.

"I like the po'try piece better than the dress or the ribon," she asserted positively.

"You'll be saying better than the baby, next!" scoffed Mickey.

"Yes, an' better than the baby!" confirmed Peaches.

"You look out Miss," marvelled Mickey. "You got to tell true or you can't be my family."

"Sure and true!" said Peaches emphatically.

"Well if I ever!" cried Mickey. "I didn't think you was that silly!"

"Tain't silly!" said Peaches. "The po'try pieces is ou! 'Tain't silly to like you better than a dress, and a ibbon, or a Precious Child. I want my piece now!"

"Well I've been so busy to-day, I forgot your piece," aid Mickey. "'Nough things have happened to make me orget my head, if 'twasn't fast. I forgot your piece. I hought you'd like the dress and the joyous thing better."

"Then you didn't forget it!" cried Peaches. "You hought something else, and you thought what ain't! So here! I want my po'try piece!"

"Well do you want it worse than your supper?" denanded Mickey.

"Yes I do!" said Peaches.

"Well use me for a mop!" cried Mickey. "Then you'll ave to wait 'til I make one."

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"Go on and make it!" ordered the child.
"Well how do you like this?" said Mickey in exaspera-

"Once a stubborn little kicker, Kicked until she made me snicker. If she had wings, she couldn't fly, 'Cause she'd be too stubborn to try."

A belligerent look slowly spread over Peaches' face.

"That's no po'try piece," she scoffed, "an' I don't like at all, an' I won't write it on my slate; not if I never arn to write anything. Mickey-lovest, please make a ce one to save for my book. It's going to have three on 'ry page, an' a nice piece o' sky like right up there for cks, and mebby—mebby a cow on it!"

"Sure a cow on it," agreed Mickey. "I saw a lot to-

y! I'll tell you after supper. Gimme a little time to

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"I wouldn't 'til I had my po'try piece," retorted Peaches.

In consideration of the poetry piece Mickey desisted. The inference was too flattering. Between narrowed lids he took a long look at Lily.

"You fool sweet little kid," he muttered.

Then he prepared supper. When he set it on the table be bent over and taking both hands he said gently:

"Flowersy-girl of moonbeam white, Golden head of sunshine bright, Dancing eyes of sky's own blue, No other flower in the world like you."

"Get the slate!" cried Peaches. "Get the slate! Now that's a po'try piece. That's the best one yet. I'm going to put that right under the cow!"

"Sure!" said Mickey. "I think that's the best yet myself. You see, you make them come better every time, 'cause you get so much sweeter every day."

"Then why did you make the bad one?" she pouted.
"Well every time you just yell 'I won't,' without ever giving me a chance to tell you what I'm going to do, or why," explained Mickey. "If only you'd learn to wait a little, you'd do better. If I was to tell you that Carrel man was at the door with a new back for you, if you turn over and let him put it in, I s'pose you'd yell: 'I won't!"

The first tinge of colour Mickey had seen, almost invisibly faint, crept to the surface of Peaches' white cheek

"Just you try it, Mickey-lovest!" she exclaimed.

"Finish your supper, and see what I try."

Peaches obeyed. She had stopped grabbing and craming. She ate slowly, masticating each morsel as the tree told Mickey she should. To-night he found her so inty and charming, as she instinctively tried to be as ce as her dress and supper demanded she should, that forgot himself, until she reminded him.

"Mickey, ain't you hungry?" she asked. "Did you we something downtown?"

Mickey rallied and ate his share, then he presented the kes, and while they enjoyed them he described every deil of the day he thought would interest her, until she id finished. Then he told her of the nurse and the esses and when she wanted to see the others he said: No sir! You got to wait till you are bathed and essed each evening, and then you can see yourself, and

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y burg. See! Our Nurse Lady at the 'Star of Hope' tched him making some one over. Every time any: brought there with a thing the matter with them, knows best how to cure, the big head knifers slip it him, and he comes and sees them do it or does it to get practice on the job. He may not come for time; he might come to-morrow. See?"

Mickey! Would he?" gasped Peaches.

te flourish. "Sure he would! That's what he r. He'd be tickled to pieces to make over the back tle girl that can't walk. Sure he would! What I are of is that you wouldn't gig back and say, 'I if you had a chance to be fixed."

hes spoke with deliberate conviction: "Mickey, st sure I've about quit that!"

Il, it's time!" said Mickey. "What you got to do t, and sleep, and be bathed, and rubbed, and get so I strong that when I come chasing up the steps and e's here, Lily, clap your arms around my neck and the china room and the glass table and be fixed,' st take a grip and never open your head. See! n be a game little kid, the gamest I ever saw, you en, Lily, won't you?"

e!" she promised. "I'll just grab you and I'll say, ickey, go h---!"

pe! Wope there lady!" interposed Mickey. "Look There's a subm'rine coming. Sink it! Sink it!" :key what's a subm'rine?" asked Peaches.

"Why it's like this," explained Mickey. "There's aces where there's water, like I bring to wash you, only iles and miles of it, such a lot, it's called an ocean—"
"Sure! 'Crost it where the kings is makin' people kill eirselves," cried Peaches.

"Yes," agreed Mickey. "And on the water, sailing ong like a lady, is a big, beautiful ship. Then there's a sty little boat that can creep under the water, and it ps up when she doesn't know it's coming, and blows a ble in the fine ship and sinks her all spoiled. But if e nice ship sees the subm'rine coming and sinks it, 'fore gets her, why then she stays all nice, and isn't spoiled all. See?"

"Subm'rines spoil things?" ventured Peaches.

"They were just invented for that, and nothing else."
"Mickey, I'll just say, 'Hurry! Run fast!' Mickey,

CHAPTER IX

JAMES JR. AND MALCOLM

"Malcolm, being rich has put us ten miles behind where we ought to.

We're girl-baby softies! We wouldn't a-faced the guns and not told here the soldiers were; we'd have bellered for cake!"

James.

dazed to realize her suffering. She had intended doing something; the fringed orchids reminded er. She rang for water to put them in, and her maid ith shaking fingers dressed her, then ordered the car. he girl understood that some terrible thing had happened nd offered to go with the woman who moved so mechanially she proved she scarcely knew what she was doing.

"No," said Mrs. Minturn. "No, the little soul has been ut there a long time alone, her mother had better go alone nd see how it is."

She entered the car, gave her order and sank back gainst the seat dumbly enduring almost insufferable eartache. When the car stopped, she descended and and the gates guarding the doors of the onyx vault acked. She shook the gates, but they were bronze emented in marble. She pushed her flowers between the ars and dropped them before the doors, then wearily ank on the first step and leaned her head against the

ate, trying to think, but she could not. Near dawn her river spoke to her.

"It's almost morning," he said. "You've barely time o reach home before the city will be stirring."

She paid no attention, so at last he touched her. Then he aroused and looked at him.

"You, Weston?" she asked.

"Yes, Madam," he said. "I'm afraid for you. I venured to come closer than you said. Excuse me."

"Thank you Weston," she answered.

"Let me drive you home now, Madam," he begged.

"Just where would you take me if you were taking me ome, Weston?"

"Where we came from," he replied.

"Do you think that has ever been a home, Weston?"

"I have thought it the finest home in Multiopolis,

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many times; he brought him again. At once John Haynes dismissed with a satisfactory fee all the servants in the Minturn household, arranged everything necessary, and saw Mrs. Minturn aboard a train in company with a new maid of his selection; then he mailed a deed of gift of the Minturn residence to the city of Multiopolis for an endowed Children's Hospital. The morning papers briefly announced the departure in one paragraph and the gift in another. At his breakfast table James Minturn read both items and sat in deep thought.

"Not like her!" was his mental comment. "I can understand how that place would become intolerable to her; but I never knew her to give a dollar to the suffering. Now she makes a princely gift, not because she is generous, but because the house has become unbearable; and as usual, with no thought of any one save herself. If the city dares accept, how her millionaire neighbours will rage at disease and sickness being brought into the finest residence district! Probably the city will be compelled to sell it and build somewhere else. But there is something fitting in the reparation of turning a building that has been a place of torture to children, into one of healing. It proves that she has a realizing sense."

He glanced around the bright, cheerful breakfast room, with its carefully set, flower-decorated table, at his sister at its head, at a son on either hand, at a pleasant-faced young tutor on one side, and his Little Brother on the other; for so had James Minturn ordered his household.

Mrs. Winslow had left a home she loved to come at her

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rother's urgent call for help to save his boys. The tutor ad only a few hours of his position, and thus far his alary seemed the only attractive feature. James Jr. and Ialcolm were too dazed to be natural for a short time. hey had been picked up bodily, and carried kicking and creaming to this place, where they had been bathed and ressed in plain durable clothing. Malcolm's bed stood eside Little Brother's in a big sunny room; James' was ear the tutor's in a chamber the counterpart of the other, ave for its bookcases lining one wall.

There was a schoolroom not yet furnished with more nan tables and chairs, its floors and walls bare, its winows having shades only. When worn out with the truggle the amazed boys had succumbed to sleep on little, ard, white beds with plain covers; had awakened to a old bath at the hands of a man, and when they rebelled

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screams to pick them up, they arose fighting each other. The tutor passed and James tried to kick him, merely because he could. He was not there either, but he stopped for this advice to the astonished boy: "If I were you I wouldn't do that. This is a free country, and if you have a right to kick me, I have the same right to kick you. I wouldn't like to do it. I'd rather allow mules and vicious horses to do the kicking; still if you're bound to kick, I can; but my foot is so much bigger than yours, and if I forgot and took you for a football, you'd probably have to go to the hospital and lie in a plaster cast a week or so. If I were you, I wouldn't! Let's go watch the birds till breakfast is called, instead."

The invitation was not accepted. The tutor descended alone and as he stepped to the veranda met Mr. Minturn.

"Well?" that gentleman asked tersely.

Mr. Tower shook his head. He was studying law. He needed money to complete his course. He needed many things he could acquire from James Minturn.

"It's a problem," he said guardedly.

"You draw your salary for its solution," Mr. Minturn said tartly. "Work on the theory I outlined; if it fails after a fair test, we'll try another. Those boys have got to be saved. They are handsome little chaps with fine bodies and good ancestry. What happened just now?"

"They tried to rush William on the top step, and William evaporated, so they took the medicine themselves they intended for him."

"Exactly right," commented Mr. Minturn. "Get the

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ea and work on it. Every rough, heartless thing they tempt, if at all possible, make it a boomerang that returns to strike them their own blow; but you reserve blows a last resort. There is the bell." Mr. Minturn called: James! Malcolm! The breakfast bell is ringing. ome!"

There was not a sound. Mr. Minturn nodded to the stor and together they ascended the stairs. They found he boys hidden in a wardrobe. Mr. Minturn opened the por and gravely looked at them.

"Boys," he said, "you're going to live with me after this, and you're to come when I call you, and you're going to at the food that makes men of boys, where I can see what ou get, and you are going to do what I believe best for ou, until you are so educated that you are capable of ninking for yourselves. Now what you must do, is to

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show your manhood. With one finger either of us ft you out and carry you down by force; and we will, thy not be gentlemen and walk down as we do?" th boys looked at him, and then at each other, but ned where they were.

ime is up!" said Mr. Minturn. "They've had their e, Mr. Tower. If they won't take it, they must the consequences. Take Malcolm, I'll bring s."

tantly both boys began to fight, and no one bribed to stop, struck them, or did anything at all according ecedent. They raged until they exposed a vulner-point, then each man laid hold, lifted and carefully d down a boy, and placed him on a chair. James 11 11 12 1

ake James' chair away!" ordered Mr. Minturn. prefers to be served on the floor."

Icolm laughed.

don't either. I slipped," cried James.

hen excuse yourself, resume your chair, and be ty careful you don't slip again."

nes looked at his father sullenly, but at last muttered, use me," and took the chair. With bright inflamed hey stared at their almost unknown father, who now hem in his power; at a woman they scarcely knew, they were told to call Aunt Margaret; at a strange who was to take Lucette's place, and who had a grip nade hers seem feeble, and who was to teach them the of which they knew nothing, and therefore hated;

Id at a boy nearer their own size and years, whom their ther called William. Both boys refused fruit and cereal and rudely demanded cake and ice cream. Margareinslow looked at her brother in despair. He placidly at a streakfast and remarked that the cook was a treasure, and the food excellent. As he left the table Mr. Minturn id the papers before his sister, indicating the paragraphs had read, and calling for his car he took the tutor and e boys and left for his office. He ordered them to return r him at half-past eleven, and with minute instructions to how they were to proceed, Mr. Tower and William ove to the country to begin the breaking in of the Minru boys.

They disdained ball, did not care for football, improsed golf clubs and a baseball were not interesting, furer than the use of the clubs on each other, which was not loved. They did not care what the flowers were they "I'll tell you fellows, I believe if we would build a dam we could catch them."

The boys stopped and looked at him.

"Gather stones and pile them up till I get my shoes off."

Instantly both boys obeyed. Mr. Tower and William stripped their feet, and rolled their trousers. Into the creek they went setting stones, packing with sod and muck, using sticks and leaves until in a short time they had a dam before which the water began rising, then overflowing.

"Now we must wait until it clears," said William.

So they sat under a tree and watched until in the clean pool formed they could see little fish gathering and darting around. Then the boys lay on the banks and tried to catch them with their hands, and succeeded in getting a few. Mr. Tower suggested they should make pools, one on each side of the creek, for their fish, and they eagerly went to work. They pushed and slapped each other, they fought over the same stone, but each constructed with his own hands a stone and mud enclosed pool in which to pen his fish. They were really interested in what they were doing, they really worked, and soon they were really tired, and no question at all, but they were really hungry. With one loud imperative voice they demanded food.

"You forget what your father told you at breakfast," reminded Mr. Tower. "He knew you were coming to the country where you couldn't get food. William and I are not hungry. We want to catch these little fish, and see who can get the most. We think it's fun. We can't take the car back until your father said to come."

"You take us back right now, and order meat, and cake, nd salad and ice cream, lots of it!" stormed James.

"I have to obey your father!" said Mr. Tower.

"I just hate fathers!" cried James.

"I'll wager you do!" conceded Mr. Tower.

James stared open mouthed.

"I can see how you feel," said Mr. Tower companionbly. "When a fellow has been coddled by nurses all his fe, and has no muscle, and no appetite except for the hings he shouldn't have, and never has done anything but illy park-playing, it must be a great change to be out with nen, and do as they do."

Both boys were listening, so he went on: "But don't eel badly, and don't waste breath hating. Save it for the rand fun we are going to have, and next time good food is efore you, eat like men. We don't start back for an hour

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"Being hungry ain't fun," growled Malcolm.

"That's your own fault," Mr. Tower reminded him. You wouldn't eat. That was a good breakfast."

"Wasn't a thing Lucette gave us!" scoffed James.

"But you don't like Lucette very well," said Mr. Tower. After you've been a man six months, you won't eat cake or breakfast; or much of it at any time."

"Lucette is never coming back?" marvelled Malcolm.

"Never!" said Mr. Tower conclusively.

"How soon are we going home?" demanded James.

"Never!" replied Mr. Tower. "You are going to ve where you were last night, after this."

"Where is mamma?" cried Malcolm.

"Gone for the summer," explained Mr. Tower.

"I know. She always goes," said James. "But she tok us before. I just hate it. I like this better. We take no difference to her anyway. Let her go!"

"Ain't we rich boys any more?" inquired Malcolm.

"I don't know," said Mr. Tower. "That is your ther's business. I think you have just as much money ever, but from now on, you are going to live like men." "We won't live like men!" cried both boys.

"Now look here," said Mr. Tower kindly, "you may ake my word for it that a big boy almost ten years old, and another nearly his age, who can barely read, who can't arow straight, who can't swim, or row, or walk a mile ithout puffing like an engine, who begins to sweat over ting a few stones, is a mighty poor specimen. You link you are wonders because you've heard yourselves

lled big, fine boys; you are soft fatties. I can take you the park and pick out any number of boys half your se and age who can make either of you yell for mercy in ree seconds. You aren't boys at all; if you had to get your feet and hike back to town, before a mile you'd being beside the road bellowing worse than I've heard you t. You aren't as tough and game as half the girls of our age I know."

"You shut your mouth!" cried James in rage.

Mother'll fire you!"

"It is you who are fired, young man," said the tutor. Your mother is far away by this time. She left you boys ith your father, who pays me to make men of you, and m going to do it. You are big enough to know that will never be men motoring around with nurses, like hall babies; eating cake and cream when your bones and uscles are in need of stiffening and toughening. William.

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play without working. You've got to pull to row a boat, to hold a horse. You must step out lively to play tennis, or golf, or to skate, and if you try to swim without work, you'll drown."

"I ain't going to do those things!" retorted James.

"No, you are going to spend your life riding around in an automobile with a nurse in a cap and apron, feeding you cake!" scoffed the tutor.

William shouted and turned a cart wheel so flashingly quick that both boys jumped. James' face coloured a slow red, and suddenly the tutor took hope.

"I see that makes you blush," he said. "No wonder! You should be as tough as leather, and spinning along this creek bank like William. Instead you are a big, bloated softy. You carry too much fat for your size, and you are mushy as pudding! If I were you, I'd surprise my father by showing him how much of a man I could be, instead of how much of a baby."

"Father isn't a gentleman!" announced Malcolm. "Lucette said so!"

"Hush!" cried Mr. Tower. "Don't you ever say that again! Your father is one of the big men of this great city: one of the men who think, and plan, and make things happen, that result in health, safety and comfort for all of us. One of the men who is going to rule, not only his own home, but this city, and this whole state, one of these days. You don't know your father. You don't know what men say and think of him. You do know that Lucette was fit for nothing but to wash and

ress you like babies, big boys who should have been thamed to let a woman wait on them. You do know that he is on her way back where she came from, because she ould not do her work right. And you have the nerve to all me what she said about a fine, strong, manly man like our father. I'm amazed at you!"

"Gentlemen don't work!" persisted Malcolm. "Mother id so!"

"I'm sorry to contradict your mother, but she forgot omething," said Mr. Tower. "If the world has any genemen it surely should be those born for generations of oyal and titled blood, and reared from their cradles in very tradition of their rank. Europe is full of them, and any are superb men. I know a few. Now will you tell the where they are to-day? They are down in trenches a feet under ground, shivering in mud and water, half ead for sleep, and food, and rest, trying to save the land

to seen Gretchen and Lucette fight! They ain't either one got much hair left."

The tutor could not help laughing; but he made room for a boy on either side of him, and began on the war. It was a big subject and there were phases of it that shocked and repulsed him; but it was his task to undo the wrong work of ten years, he was forced to use the instrument that would accomplish that end. With so much material he could tell of things unavoidable, that men of strength and courage were doing, not forgetting the boys and the women. William stretched at his feet and occasionally made a suggestion, or asked a question, while James and Malcolm were interested in something at last. When it was time to return, neither one wanted to start, despite the fact they must have been very hungry.

"Your father's orders were to come for him at halfpast eleven," reminded Mr. Tower. "I work for him, and I must obey!"

"Nobody pays any attention to father," cried James.
"I order you to stay here and tell of the fighting. Tell
again about the French boy who wouldn't show where the
troops were. Again I say!"

"Oh, I am to take orders from you, am I?" queried Mr. Tower. "All right! Pay my salary and give me the money to buy our lunch!"

James stood thinking a second. "I have all the money I want," he said. "I go to Mrs. Ranger for my money. Mother always makes her give me what I ask for."

"You have forgotten that you have moved, and brought

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y yourselves," said Mr. Tower. "Your mother and money are gone. Your father pays the bills now, and ou'll watch sharp, you'll see that things have changed ce this time yesterday. Every one pays all the attenn there is to father now. What we have, and do, and nt, must come from him, and as it's a big contract, and s needed to help manage this city, we'd better begin nking about father, and taking care of him as much as can. Now we are to obey him. Come on William. lunch time, and I'm so hungry I can scarcely wait." The boys climbed into the car without a word, and bee it had gone a mile Malcolm slipped against the tutor shortly thereafter James slid to the floor, tired to insibility and sound asleep. So Mr. Minturn found them en he came from his office. He looked them over efully, wet, mud-stained, grimy, bruised and sleeping exhausted warriors

hungry they were, brought two boys ready to eat anything, to the table. Cake and cream were not even mentioned. Bread and milk, cold meat, salad, and a plain pudding were delicious, and as their appetites were appeared, they both evinced a disposition to talk.

Between bites James studied his father critically and suddenly burst forth: "Are you a gentleman?"

"I try to be," answered Mr. Minturn.

"Are you running this city?" put in Malcolm.

"I am doing what I can to help," said his father.

"Make Johnston take me home to get my money."

"You have no home but this," said Mr. Minturn.
"Your old home now belongs to the city of Multiopolis, and it is being torn up and made over into a place where sick children can be cured. If you are ever too ill for us to manage, we'll take you there to be doctored."

"Will mother and Lucette be there?" asked James.

Malcolm nudged his brother.

"Can't you remember?" he said. "Lucette has gone across the ocean, and she is never coming back, goody! goody! And you know about how much mother cares when we are sick. She's coming the other way, when anybody is sick. She just hates sick people. Let them go, and get your money!"

Thus reminded, James began again.

"I want to get my money," he said.

"Your money came from your mother, and it went with your home, your clothes, and your playthings," explained Mr. Minturn. "You have none until you earn some. I

can give you a home, education, and a fine position when you are old enough to hold it; but I can't give you money. No one ever gave me any. I always had to work for mine. From now on you are going to live with me, and if you have money you'll have to go to work and earn it."

Both boys looked aghast at their father.

"Ain't we rich any more?" they demanded.

"No," said Mr. Minturn. "Just comfortable!"

James leaned back in his chair, and twisted his body in its smooth linen covering. He looked intently at the room, table and people surrounding it. He glanced from the window at the wide green lawn, the big trees, and for an instant seemed to be listening to the birds singing there. He laid down his fork and turned to his brother. Then he exploded the bomb that shattered the family.

"Oh damn being rich!" he cried. "I like being comfortable a lot better! Malcolm, being rich has put us about
ten miles behind where we ought to be. We're baby-girl
softies! We wouldn't a-faced the guns and not told where
the soldiers were, we'd a-bellered for cake. Brace up!
Let's get in the game! Father, have we got to go on the
street and hunt work, or can you give us a job?"

James Minturn tried twice and then pushing back his chair left the table precipitately. James Jr. looked after him doubtfully. He turned to Aunt Margaret.

"Please excuse me," he said. "I guess he choked. I'd better go pound him on the back like Lucette does us."

Junior followed Senior.

Malcolm looked at Aunt Margaret.

"We are going to be gentlemen," he announced. "Mother won't let us work."

"It's like this Malcolm," said Aunt Margaret gently. "Mother had charge of you for ten years, and the women she employed didn't train you as boys should be, so mother has turned you over to father, and for the next ten years you will try another plan, and after that, you will be big enough to decide how you want to live; but now I think you will just love father's way, if you will behave yourself long enough to find out what fun it is."

"Mother won't like it," said Malcolm positively.

"I think she does dear, or she wouldn't have gone and left you to try it," said Aunt Margaret. "She knew what your father would think you should do; if she hadn't thought he was right she would have taken you with her, as she always did before."

"I just hate being taken on trains and boats with her. So does James! We like the dam, and the fish, and we're going to have bows and arrows, and shoot at mark."

"And we are going to swim and row," added William.

"And we are going to be soldiers, and hurl back the enemy," boasted Malcolm, "ain't we Mr. Tower?"

"Indian scouts are more fun," suggested the tutor.

"And there is the money we must earn, if we've got to," said Malcolm. "I guess father is telling James how. I'll go ask him too. Excuse me, Aunt Margaret!"

"Of all the surprises I ever did have, this is the biggest one!" said Aunt Margaret. "I was afraid I never could like them. I thought this morning it would take years." "There is nothing in the world like the receptivity and asticity of children," said the tutor. "This is my second perience with small boys. My first was very different, it I have taught school some, and I know that a child n settle in a new environment in a few hours."

A little later James Minturn appeared on his veranda th a small boy clinging to each hand. The trio came rth with red eyes, but firmly allied.

"Call the car, if you please, William," said Senior. "In going to help build that dam higher, and see how any fish I can catch for my pool."

Malcolm walked beside him and rubbed his head caressgly across an arm. "We don't have to go on the streets id hunt," he announced. "Father is going to find us ork. But I guess while the war is so bad, we better ink milk, and send most we earn to the boys who kill them, and He won't like that. Let's just look at them, and leave them in the water."

"Malcolm, the fish 'belong to God,'" said James, turning to his brother. "We may play with them, but we mustn't take them out of the water and hurt them."

"Well, who's going to take them out of the water?" cried Malcolm. "I'm just going to scoot one over into father's pool to start him. Will you give him one too?"

"Yes," said James Jr.

"The next money I earn, I shall send to the war; but the first time I rake the lawn, and clean the rugs, I'll give what I earn to father, so he will have more time to play with us. Father is the biggest man in this city!"

"It may take a few days to get a new régime started," said father, "I've lived only for work so long; but as soon as it's possible, my day will be so arranged that some part of it shall be yours, boys, to show me what you are doing, and I think one day can be given wholly to taking a lunch and going to the country."

With an ecstatic whoop they rushed James Minturn again, and his wide aching arms opened to them.

CHAPTER X

THE WHEEL OF LIFE

What each woman honestly wants is her man, her cave, and her baby."

Leslie.

HAT are your plans for this summer, Leslie?"
asked Mr. Winton over his paper at breakfast.
"The real question is, what are yours?"
"I have none," said Mr. Winton, "and the truth is, I n't see my way to making any for myself. Between us, ictly, Swain has been hard hit. He gave me my chance life. It isn't in my skin to pack up and leave for

vestments. He was running light anyway in an effort to recoup. All of us are on a tension brought about by the result of political changes, to which we were struggling to adjust ourselves, when the war began working greater hardships and entailing millions of loss and expenses."

"I see, and that's why I said the real question was, 'what are your plans?'" explained Leslie, "because when I find out, if perchance they should involve staying on the job this summer, why I just wanted to tell you that I'm on the job too, and I've thought out the grandest scheme."

"Yes, Leslie! Tell me!" said Mr. Winton.

"It's like this," said Leslie. "Everybody is economizing, shamelessly—and that's a bully word, Daddy, for in most instances it is shameless. Open faced 'Lord save me and my wife, and my son John and his wife.' In our women's clubs and lectures, magazines and sermons, we've had a steady dose all winter of hard times, and economy, and I've tried to make my friends see that their efforts at economy are responsible for the very hardest crux of the hard times."

"You mean, Leslie-?" suggested Mr. Winton eagerly.

"I mean all of us quit using eggs, dealers become frightened, eggs soar higher. Economize on meat, packers buy less, meat goes up. All of us discharge our help, army of unemployed swells by millions. It works two ways, and every friend I've got is economizing for herself, and with every stroke for herself she is weakening her nation's financial position and putting a bigger burden on the man she is trying to help." "Well Leslie-" cried her father.

"The time has come for women to find out what it is il about, and then put their shoulders to the wheel of life and push. But before we gain enough force to start with my momentum, women must get together and decide that they want, what they are pushing for."

"Have you decided what you are pushing for?"

"Unalterably!" cried the girl.

"And what is it?" asked her father.

"My happiness! My joy in life!" she exclaimed.

"And exactly in what do you feel your happiness consts, Leslie?" he asked.

"You and Douglas! My home and my men and what hey imply!" she answered instantly. "As I figure it, 's homes that count, Daddy. If the nation prospers, the irth rate of Americans has got to keep up, or soon the amigrants will be in control everywhere as they are in

"Well Leslie!" cried Mr. Winton.

"You said that before Daddy!" exclaimed the girl. "Yet what you truly want of a woman is a home and children. Children imply to all men what I am to you. If some men have not reared their children so that they receive from them what you get from me, it is time for the men to realize this, and change their methods of rearing their daughters and sons. A home should mean to every man what your home does to you. If all men do not get from their homes what you do, in most cases it is their own fault. Of course I know there are women so abominably obsessed with self, they refuse to become mothers, and wefer a café, with tangoing between courses, to a home; sich women should have first the ducking stool, and if that in't efficacious, extermination; they are a disgrace to our civilization and the weakest spot we have. They are at the bottom of the present boiling discontent of women who really want to be home loving, home keeping. They are directly responsible for the fathers, sons, brothers, and lovers with two standards of morals. A man reared in the right kind of a home, by a real mother, who goes into other homes of the same kind, ruled by similar mothers, when he leaves his, and marries the right girl and establishes for himself a real home, is not going to go wrong. It is the sons, lovers, and husbands of the women who refuse home and children, and carry their men into a perpetual round of what they deem pleasure in their youth, who find life desolate when age begins to come, and who instantly rebel strongest against the very conditions they

have made. I've been listening to you all my life, Daddy, and remembering mother, reading, thinking, and watching for what really pays, and believe me, I've found out. I gave Nellie Minturn the best in my heart the other lay, but you should see what I got back. Horrors, Daddy! Just plain horrors! I said to Douglas that night when I read him the letter I afterward showed you, that I, as she suggested, I was 'ever faintly tempted to neglect some life for society,' in her I would have all the 'horrible xample' I'd ever need, and rest assured I shall."

"Poor woman!" exclaimed Mr. Winton.

"Exactly!" cried Leslie. "And the poorest thing bout it is that she is not to blame in the least. You and ny mother could have made the same kind of a woman of ne. If you had fed me cake instead of bread; if you had iven me candy instead of fruit; if you had taken me to the

we are at the widest sweep of the other. They were forced to enter the forest and in most cases defend themselves from savages and animals; to work without tools, to live with few comforts. In their determination to save their children from hardships, they lost sense, ballast and reason. They have saved them to such an extent they have lost them. By the very method of their rearing, they have robbed their children of love for, and interest in, home life, and with their own hands sent them to cafés and dance halls, when they should be at their homes building their children for the fashioning of future homes. I tell you, Daddy——"

"Leslie, tell me this," interposed Mr. Winton. "Did you get any small part of what you have been saying to me, from me? Do you feel what I have tried to teach you, and the manner in which I have tried to rear you, have put your love for me into your heart and such ideas as you are propounding into your head?"

"Of course, Daddy!" cried the girl. "Who else? Mother was dear and wonderful, but I scarcely remember ber. What you put into the growth of me, that is what is bound to come out, when I begin to live independently."

"This is the best moment of my life!" said Mr. Winton. "From your birth you have been the better part of me, to me; and with all my heart I have tried to fashion you into such a woman for a future home, as your mother began, and you have completed for me. Other things have failed me; I count you my success, Leslie!"

"Oh Daddy!" cried the happy girl.

"Now go back to our start," said Mr. Winton. "I nust leave soon. You have plans for the summer, of ourse! I realized that at the beginning. Are you ready o tell me?"

"I am ready to ask you," she said.

"Thank you," said Mr. Winton. "I appreciate the ifference. Surely a man does enjoy counting for somehing with his women."

"Spoiled shamelessly, dearest, that's what you are," aid Leslie. "A spoiled, pampered father! But to consude. Mr. Swain helped you. Pay back, Daddy, no natter what the cost; pay back. You help him, I'll help ou! My idea was this: for weeks I've foreseen that you youldn't like to leave business this summer. Douglas is elving into that investigation Mr. Minturn started him and he couldn't be dragged away. He's perfectly

lean-to and a log stable, beside a lake where there is grand fishing and swimming."

"But Leslie-" protested Mr. Winton.

"Now listen!" cried the girl. "The rent is nominal. We get the house, stable, orchard, garden, a few acres and a rented cow. The cabin has two tiny rooms above, one for you, the other for Douglas. Below, it has a room for me, a dining room and a kitchen. The big log barn close beside has space in the hay-mow for the women, and in one side below for our driver, the other for the cars. Over the cabin is a loaded grapevine. Around it there are fruit and apple trees. There is a large, rich garden. If I had your permission I could begin putting in vegetables to-morrow that would make our summer supply. Rogers—"

"You are not going to tell me Rogers would touch a garden?" queried Mr. Winton.

"I am going to tell you that Rogers has been with me in every step of my investigations," replied Leslie. "Yesterday I called in my household and gave them a lecture on the present crisis; I found them a remarkably well-informed audience. They had a very distinct idea that if I economized by dismissing them for the summer, and leaving the house with a caretaker, what it would mean to them. Then I took my helpers into the car and drove but the Atwater road—you know it well Daddy, the road that runs smooth over miles of country and then intead of jumping into a lake as it seems to be going to, it wings into corduroy through a marsh, runs up on a little

bridge spanning the channel between two lakes, lifts to Atwater lake shore, than which none is more lovely—you remember the white sand floor and the clean water for swimming—climbs another hill, and opposite beautiful wood, there stands the log cabin I told you of, there I took them and explained. They could go out and clean up in a day, Rogers could plant the garden and take enough on one truck load, and in the big car, for a beginning. We may have wood for the fireplace by gathering it from the forest floor. Rogers again!"

"Are you quite sure about Rogers?"

"Suppose you ride with him going down and ask him yourself," suggested Leslie. "Rogers is anxious to hold his place. You see it's like this: all of them get regular wages, have a chance at the swimming, rowing, gardening and the country. The saving comes in on living expenses. Out there we have the cow, flour, fish, and poultry from the neighbours, fresh eggs, butter and the garden—I can cut expenses to one-fourth; lights altogether. Moonshine and candles will serve; cooking fuel, gasoline. Daddy will you go to-night and see?"

"No, I won't go to-night and see, I'll go swim and fish," said Mr. Winton. "Great Heavens, Leslie, do you really mean to live all summer beside a lake, where a man can expand, absorb and exercise? I must get out my fishing tackle. I wonder what Douglas has! I've tried that lake when bass were slashing around wild thorn and crab trees shedding petals and bugs. It is man's sport there! I like black bass fishing, and I remember that water. Fine

for swimming! Not the exhilaration of salt, perhaps, but grand, clean, old northern Indiana water, cool enough from springs. I love it! Lord, Leslie! Why don't we own that place? Why haven't we homed there, and been comfortable for years?"

"I shall go ahead then?" queried Leslie.

"You shall go a-hurry, Miss, hurry!" cried Mr. Winton. "I'll give you just two days. One to clean, the other to move; to-morrow night send for me. I want a swim; and cornbread, milk, and three rashers of bacon for my dinner and nothing else; and can't the maids have my room and let me have a blanket on the hay?"

"But father, the garden!" cautioned Leslie.

"Oh drat the garden!" cried Mr. Winton.

"But if you go to dratting things, I can't economize," the girl reminded him. "Rogers and I have that garden down on paper, and it's late now."

"Leslie, don't the golf links lie half a mile from there?"

"Closer Daddy," said the girl, "right around the corner."

"I don't see why you didn't think of it before," he said. "Have you told Douglas?"

"Not a word!" exclaimed Leslie. "I'm going to get his room ready and invite him out when everything is in fine order."

"Don't make things fine," said Mr. Winton. "Let's have them rough!"

"They will be rough enough to suit you, Daddy," aughed Leslie, "but a few things have got to be done."

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"Then hurry and don't forget the snake question."

"People are and have been living there for generations; common care is all that is required," said Leslie. "I'll be careful, but if you tell Bruce until I am ready, I'll never forgive you."

Mr. Winton arose. "'Come to me arms,'" he laughed, preading them wide. "I wonder if Douglas Bruce knows

what a treasure he is going to possess!"

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"Certainly not!" said Leslie emphatically. "I wouldn't have him know for the world! I am going to be his progressive housekeeping party, to which he is invited every lay, after we are married, and each day he has got a new surprise coming, that I hope he will like. The woman who endures and wears well in matrimony is the one who keeps something to herself.' It's my opinion that modern matriage would be more satisfactory if the engaged parties would not come so nearly being married, for so long before

meeds and a few tools; then returning she divided her forces and leaving part to pack the bedding, old dishes and things absolutely required for living, and stocking the pantry, she took the loaded car and drove to Atwater Lake.

The owner of the land, a cultured, refined gentleman, who spoke the same brand of English used by the Wintons, and evinced a knowledge of the same books, was genuinely interested in Leslie and her plans. It was a land owner's busiest season, but he spared a man an hour with a plow to turn up the garden, and came down himself and with practiced hand swung the scythe, and made sure about the snakes. Soon the maids had the cabin walls swept, the floors scrubbed, the windows washed, and that was all that could be done. The seeds were earth enfolded in the cut grass was raked back, and spread to dry for the lented cow.

When nothing further was to be accomplished there, they returned to Multiopolis to hasten preparations for the coming day. It was all so good Leslie stopped at her sather's office to see if she could speak with him, and foured a flood of cloverbloom, bird notes and water thimmer into his willing ears, that very nearly spoiled his power of concentration for the day.

She seldom went to Douglas Bruce's offices, but she ran up a few moments to try in person to ease what she would be disappointment in not spending the evening ther. The day would be full far into the night with that at home, he would notice the closing of the house.

and she could not risk him spoiling her plans by finding what they were, before she was ready. She found surrounded with huge ledgers, delving and already ting for Mickey. Mickey could do a thing in half time; Mickey handed the right book; Mickey had senough to see when the light was in a fellow's eyes shift the blind—

She stood laughing in his doorway, and was half pi to find him so absorbed in his work, and so full of the he was missing, that he seemed to take her news that was too busy to see him that night with quite too beat calmness. He was almost too cheerful about it and ready with the suggestion that when he finished he Mickey would go to the golf grounds and have a g and then he would spend the evening at the club; but earnestness about coming the following night worked and and Leglic left laughing to herealf over the

manners must be polished, and the way to do it was not to drop to his level, but to improve Mickey. And again, the day before, he had told Mickey to sit down and wait until an order was given him. To invite him to "get n the game" now, was good alliteration; it pleased the fornal Scotch ear as did many another United States phrase of the street, so musical, concise and packed with meaning as to become almost classic; but in his heart he meant as Mickey had suspected, "to do him good"; so he must lay its foundations with care. What he said was a cordial and cheerful, "Good Morning!"

"Noon," corrected Mickey. "Right ye are! Good it is! What's my job? 'Scuse me! I won't ask that again!"

"Plenty," Douglas admitted, "but first, any luck with he paper route?"

"All over but killing the boy I sold it to, if he doesn't pright. I ain't perfectly crazy about him. He's a apa's boy and pretty soft; but maybe he'll learn, and was a fine chance for me, so I soaked it."

"To whom did you sell, Mickey?" asked Douglas.

"To your driver, for his boy," answered Mickey. "We lked it over last night. Say, was your driver 'the same matinued,' or did you detect glimmerings of beefsteak ad blood in him this morning?"

"Why?" asked Douglas curiously.

"Oh he's such a stiff," explained Mickey. "He looks pout as lively as a salted herring."

"And did you make an effort to enliven him, Mickey?"
"Sure!" cried Mickey. "The operation was highly

uccessful! The patient made a fine recovery. Right on he job, right on the street, right at the thickest traffic orner, right at 'dead man's crossing,' he let out a whoop hat split the features of a copper who hadn't smiled in ears. It was a double play and it worked fine. What I want to know is whether it was fleeting or holds over."

"It must be 'over,' Mickey," said Douglas. "Since you mention it, he opened the door with the information hat it was a fine morning, and I recall that there was colour on his face, and light in his usually dull eyes."

"Good!" cried Mickey. "Then there's some hope that is kid may go and do likewise."

"The boy who takes your route has to smile, Mickey?"
"Well you see most of my morning customers are regu-

ars, and they are used to it," said Mickey. "The minute one goes into his paper, he's lost 'til knocking off time;

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"And so they will!" cried Mickey. "You see the men who buy of me are the top crust of Multiopolis, the big fine men who can smile, and open their heads and say a pleasant word, and they like to. It does them good! I Eve on it! I always get my papers close home as I can so I have time coming down on the cars to take a peep myself, and nearly always there are at least three things on the first sage that hit you in the eye. Once long ago I was in the Herald office with a note to Chaffner the big chief, and I gave him a little word jostle as I passed it over, and he looked at me and laughed good natured like, so I handed him this: 'Are you the big stiff that bosses the make-up?' He says, 'Mostly! I can control it if I want to.' 'All right for you,' I said. 'I live by selling your papers, but could sell a heap more if I had a better chance.' 'Chance what way?' said he. 'Building your first page,' said I. He said, 'Sure. What is it that you want?' 'I'll show ou,' said I. 'I'll give you the call I used this morning.' Then I cut loose and just like on the street I cried it, and e velled some himself. 'What more do you want?' he ked me. 'Alot.' I said. 'You see I only got a little time the cars before my men begin to get on, and my time is Precious. I can't read second, third, and forty-eleventh Pages hunting up eye-openers. I must get them first page, cause I'm short time, and got my pack to hang on to. Now bakin'-up, if you'd a-put that "Germans driven from the est foot of Belgian soil," first, it would a-been better, 'cause hat's what every living soul wants. Then the biggest thing thout ourselves. Place it prominent in big black letters,

here I get it quick and easy, and then put me in a scream. et me a laugh in my call, and I'll sell you out all by my-Folks are spending millions per annum for the glad ream at night, they'll pay just the same morning, give em a chance. I live on a laugh,' said I, to Chaffner. He oked me over and he said, 'When you get too big for the pers, you come to me and I'll make a top-notch reporter t of you.' 'Thanks Boss,' said I, 'you couldn't graft that on to me, with asphaltum and a buzz saw. I'm going be on your front page 'fore you know it, but it's going to a poetry piece that will raise your hair; I ain't going frost my cake, poking into folks' private business, telling ameful things on them that half kills them. Lots of mes I see them getting their dose on the cars, and they st shiver, and go white, and shake. Nix on the printing out shame, and sin, and trouble in the papers for me!" said, and he just laughed and looked at me closer and he

aid I, pointing to where it said, 'Movement on foot to Liminate graft from city offices.' 'You think that comes rext?' said he. 'Sure!' said I. 'Hits the pocketbook! Sure! Heart first! Money next!' 'Are you so sure it sn't exactly the reverse?' asked he, 'Know it!' said I. Watch the crowds any day, and every clip you'll see that loving a man's country, and his home, and his kids, and retting fair play, comes before money.' 'Yes, I guess it does!' he said thoughtful like, 'least it should. We'll make it the policy of this paper to put it that way anyhow. What next?' 'Now your laugh,' said I. 'And while you are at it, make it a scream!' 'All right,' he said, 'I haven't anything funny in yet, but I'll get it. Now show me where you want these spaced.' So I showed him, and every single time you look, you'll see Mr. Herald is made up that way, and you ought to hear me trolling out that Belgian line, soft and easy, snapping in the graft quicklike, and then yelling out the scream. You bet it catches them! If I can't get that kid on to his job, 'spect I'll have to take it back myself; least if he can't get on, he's doomed to get off. I gave him a three days' try, and if he doesn't catch by that time, he never will. See?"

"But how are you going to know?" asked Douglas.

"I'm going down early and follow him and drill him like a Dutch recruit, and he'll wake up my men, and interest them and fetch the laugh or he'll stop!"

"You think you got a fair price?" asked Douglas.

"Know it! All it's worth, and it looks like a margin to ne," said Mickey.

"That's all right then, and thank you for telling me out the papers," said Douglas. "I enjoyed it imensely. I see you are a keen student of human nature." "Bout all the studying I get a chance at," said Mickey. "You'll have opportunity at other things now," said ouglas. "Since you mention it, I see your point about e papers, and if that works on business men going to isiness, it should work on a jury. I think I've had it in ind, that I was to be a compendium of information ind impress on a judge or jury what I know, and why what say is right. You give me the idea that a better way ould be to impress on them what they know. Put it te this: first soften their hearts, next touch their pockets, en make them laugh; is that the idea Mickey?"

"Duck again! You're doing fine! I ain't made my ying selling men papers for this long not to know the big bys some, and more. Each man is different, but you one of the most profitable hours of my life, but concretely it is an hour, and we're going to the Country Club to-night and may stay as long as we choose—as you can, I mean—and we're going to have a grand time. You like going to the country, don't you?"

"Ain't words for telling," said Mickey, gathering his armload of books and speeding down the hall.

When the day's work was finished, with a load of books to deliver before an office closed, they started on the run to the club house. Bruce waited in the car while Mickey sped in with the books, and returning, to save opening the door and crossing before the man he was fast beginning to idolize. Mickey took one of his swift cuts across the back end of the car. While his hand was outstretched and his foot uplifted to enter, from a high-piled passing truck toppled a box, not a big box, but large enough to knock Mickey senseless and breathless when it struck him between the shoulders. Douglas had Mickey in the car with orders for the nearest hospital, toward which they were hurrying, when the boy opened his eyes and sat up. He looked inquiringly at Douglas, across whose knees he had found himself.

"Wha—what happened?" he questioned with his first good indrawing of recovered breath.

"A box fell from a truck loaded past reason and almost knocked the life out of you!" cried Douglas.

"'Knocked the life out of me?" repeated Mickey.

"You've been senseless for three blocks, Mickey," said Douglas indignantly.

knocked out altogether?" demanded Mie
"You'd have had the best surgeon in
every care, Mickey," assured Douglas.
"Ugh!" Mickey collapsed utterly.
"Must be hurt worse than I though
mental comment. "He couldn't be a couldn't be a

I ain't hurt. Not much! I'll be all i

"Drive on!" he said. "I tell you I ain't hurt!" Then he turned to Douglas.

"Coward! Who? Me!" he cried. "Me that's made my way since I can remember? Coward, did you say?"

"Of course not, Mickey!" cried Douglas. "Excuse me. I shouldn't have said that. But it was unlike you. What the devil is the matter with you?"

"I helped carry in a busted head and saw the glass table once," he cried. "Inch more and it would a-been my head—and I might have been knocked out for days. O Lord! What will I do?"

"Mickey you're not afraid?" asked Douglas.

"'Fraid? Me? 'Bout as good as coward!" commented Mickey.

"What is the matter with you?" demanded Douglas.

Mickey stared at him amazedly.

"O Lord!" he panted. "You don't s'pose I was thinking about myself, do you?"

"I don't know what to think!" exclaimed Douglas.

"Sure! How could you?" conceded Mickey.

He choked back another big dry sob.

"Gimme a minute to think!" he said. "O God! What have I been doing? I see now what I'm up against!"

"Mickey," said Douglas Bruce, suddenly filled with swelling compassion, "I am beginning to understand. Won't you tell me?"

"I guess I got to," panted Mickey. "But I'm afraid! O Lord, I'm so afraid!"

"Afraid of me, Mickey?" asked Douglas gently now.

thing!"

"Your back hurts, Mickey?" question "My back hurts? Aw forget my baroughly. "I ain't hurt, honest I ain't.

Mickey began gnawing his fingers in n

Douglas took a long penetrating look ing figure and then he said softly: "I v confide in me, Mickey! I can't tell y mean to me, or how glad I'd be if you you have some one else you like bett want to be driven?"

"Course there ain't any one I lik 'cept—" he caught a name on the tipaused. "You see it's like this," heek to this Nurse Lady before, and I know say and think. If you don't think ligo and take—"

ou are thinking about, I can't be of much help; but I'd ive considerable if you felt that you had come to love me nough to trust me."

"Trust you? Sure I trust you, about myself. But this s-" cried Mickey.

"This is about some one else?" asked Douglas casually. Mickey leaned forward, his elbows on his knees, his head ent with intense thinking.

"Much as you are doing for me," he muttered, "if you eally care, if it makes a difference to you—of course I can ust you, if you don't think as I do!"

"You surely can!" cried Douglas Bruce. "Now lickey, both of us are too shaken to care for the country; ake me home with you and let's have supper together and ecome acquainted. We can't know each other on my round alone. I must meet you on yours, and prove that 'm really your friend, and can accommodate myself to any ircumstances you can. Let's go where you live and clean p and have supper."

"Go where I live? You?" cried Mickey.

"Yes!" said Douglas. "You come from where you ve fresh and clean each day, so can I. Take me home ith you and stop at the nearest good grocery, and we ill get something to eat. I want to go dreadfully, lickey. Please?"

"Well, I ain't such a cad I'm afraid for you to see how I ve," he said. "That wouldn't kill you, though you ouldn't want to come more than once; that ain't what I as thinking about."

If he had been struck on the head, fo operation, and had lain insensible for h could get no further with that thought. proceed with the other part of his probl was better off with him than where she person could dispute that; she was improved each day but—could she be cared for still better by some one else, the long wait for him to earn the more what would be the right name for him what he could do? So they came at I car could go to Mickey's home in Sun foot of the last flight Mickey paused, I "Now I'll have to ask you to wait a He ascended, unlocked the door a

Peaches' eyes gleamed with interest as she waved him back. As Mickey c "Yes, if the box hit hard, Mickey," conceded Peaches.
"It hit so blame hard, Miss Chicken, that it knocked e down and knocked me out, and Mr. Bruce picked me p and carried me three blocks in his car before I got my ind or knew what ailed me."

Peaches' face was tragic and her hands stretched toward im. Mickey was young, and his brain was whirling so whirled off the thought that came first.

"And if it had hit me hard enough to bust my head, and d been carried to a hospital to be mended and wouldn't knowed what hurt me for days, like sometimes, who'd fed and bathed you, Miss?"

Peaches gazed at him wordless.

"You close your mouth and tell me, Miss," demanded lickey, brutal with emotion. "If I hadn't come, what ould you have done?"

Peaches shut her mouth and stared with it closed. At st she ventured a solution.

"You'd a-told our Nurse Lady," she said.

Mickey made an impatient gesture.

"Hospitals by the dozen, kid," he said, "and not a nance in a hundred I'd been took to the 'Star of Hope,' and times when your head is busted, you don't know a ning for 'most a week. What would you do if I didn't ome for a week?"

"I'd have to slide off the bed if it killed me, and roll the cupboard, and make the things do," said Peaches.

"You couldn't get up to it to save your life," said slickey, "and there's never enough for a week, and you

to a cooler place, and I don thisk being ing where you are another day; or my t It's about split now. I don't want to got to, so you take your drink and len and wash your face, and put your pr Douglas Bruce, that we work for now, and he's going to stay for supper-Shut right up! You needn't beller, have a tantrum; he's sitting out the where it's a lot worse than here, and and we ain't got time, and he won't 'ge ask; what would he want of you? and you see, Miss, that you act a lady; me lose my job with my boss, or we Hold still 'til I get your ribbon righ nightie on you. There!"

"Mickey—" began Peaches.

key darted around arranging the room, setting back hes from Peaches' lunch, pulling up a chair. Then g the door wide and called: "Ready!"

glas Bruce climbed the stairs and entered the door. ckey expected, his gaze centred and stopped, and long as a gentleman requires to recover himself, it led centred. Mickey began taking packages from ads, and still gazing Douglas yielded them. Then ped forward and Mickey placed the chair, and said: Douglas Bruce, this is Lily. This is Lily Peaches oran. Will you have a chair?"

glas was conscious that Mickey was making a appearance than he, as he strove to collect his it and frame a speech that would not set the wildly ned little creature before him shrieking. Mickey med. He turned to Peaches, put his arm around id drew her to him as he bent and kissed her.

's all right, Flowersy-girl," he said. "We like town im come. He's our friend. Our big, nice friend on't let a soul on earth get us. He doesn't even is himself, 'cause he's got one girl. His girl is the hine Lady that sent you the doll. Maybe she me some day too, and maybe she'll make the Pre-Child a new dress. Where is she?"

thes clung to Mickey and past him peered at her, and the visitor smiled his most winning smile on the girl, with the most delicately cut and moulded face, ftest big eyes, and the silkiest golden curls he ever en. He recognized Leslie's ribbon, and noted the

"Jus' as good!" she said.

"Finel" said Douglas, straightening

"An' that's my slate and lesson," said "Fine!" he said again as if it were

he knew. Mickey glanced at him curie

"She does sort of knock you out!" h

"'Sort' is rather poor. Completely, said Douglas. "She's the loveliest litt world, Mickey, but she doesn't resemble your mother?"

"Lily isn't my sister, only as you brother," said Mickey. "She was left taking care of her, and she's my find life I'm going to always keep her!"

"Oh! And how long have you ha asked Douglas.

"Now that's just what the Orphii

moved swiftly and with assurance, his head high, and his lips even, a slow deep respect for the big soul in the little body began to dawn in the heart of Douglas Bruce. Understanding of Mickey came in rivers swift and strong, and while he wondered and while he watched entranced, over and over in his head went the line, "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." With every gentle act of Mickey for the child Douglas' liking for him grew, and when he went over the supper and with the judgment of a skilled nurse selected the most delicate and suitable food for her, with each uplift of her adoring eyes to Mickey's responsive face, in the heart of the Scotsman swelled the marvel and the miracle and silenced criticism.

"A thing I can't understand is why when the L He didn't cut all of them from the same piece he d

her home, except a room packing what "moth and d putting in safety deposit what "thiever steal," and loading what would be wan she found the task too big for the time telephoned Douglas that she would be pone seeing him until the following da

"Leslie," laughed Douglas over the you ever hear of the man who cut off he at a time, so it wouldn't hurt so badly

"I do seem to have heard father refe dog," retorted the girl.

"Well this process of cutting me out at a time reminds me of 'that particul "It is a surprise all right," answered Douglas. "I'll romise to wait, I can't say how patiently. I'll be on the arbstone at four, and 'Bearer of Morning,' I have got a arprise for you too."

"Oh goody!" cried Leslie. "I adore surprises."

"You'll adore this one!"

"Douglas, you might give me a hint!" she suggested.

"Very well!" he laughed. "Since last I saw you I have en the loveliest girl of my experience."

"Delightful! Am I to see her also?" asked Leslie.

"Undoubtedly!" explained Douglas. "And you'll sucumb to her charms just as I did."

"When may I meet her?" asked Leslie eagerly.

"I can't just say; but soon now," replied Douglas.

"All right!" agreed the girl. "Be ready at four."

Leslie sat in frowning thought a moment, before the telephone, and then her ever-ready laugh bubbled. "Why didn't I think of it while I was talking?" she wondered. "Of course Mickey has taken him to see his Lily and she's a beautiful child. I must visit her soon and see about that wrong back before bone and muscle grow harder."

Then she began her task, and for the remainder of the day was so busy she made lists and worked on schedule. By evening she had a gasoline stove set up, the kitchen provisioned, her father's room ready and arrangements sufficiently completed that she sent the car to bring him to his dinner of cornbread and bacon under an apple tree scattering pink petals with every lake breeze beside the kitchen door. Then they took a boat and with Leslie

was not reeling precisely joined suspended judgment. He knew that had time to think, and talk over the si Winton, both of them might very proba woman who said the law would take I send her to a charity home for children.

Mickey, with his careful drilling on rebellion. How could the law take Did the law know anything about her care of the law when he found her? have allowed her to die grovelling in filt few more hours? He had not infringe way; he had merely saved a life the law save. Now when he had it in his postetter condition than he found it, how to step in and rob him?

Mickey did not understand and ther heart that could teach him. He had i to earn the money; if they wanted her and the Carrel man of many miracles would come for them; did he dare leave her lying an hour, when there was even hope she might be on her feet? There was only one answer to that with Mickey and it made a pain in his heart. So his greeting lacked its customary spontaneity.

On this basis they began the day, but work performed by two people each with his thought elsewhere was not a success.

By noon Bruce was irritable and Mickey was as nearly sullen as it was in his nature to be. At two o'clock Bruce surrendered, summoned the car, and started to the golf grounds. He had played three holes when he overtook a man who said a word that arrested his attention and both of them stopped, and with notebooks and pencils, under the shade of a big tree began discussing the question that meant more to Douglas than anything save Leslie. He dismissed Mickey for the afternoon, promising him that if he would be ready by six, he should be driven back to the city.

Mickey made his way to the car, left the clubs he was carrying and looked around him for a way to spend three hours. In his mood, unemployed caddies did not interest him. He wanted to be alone and concentrate on his problem, but people were everywhere and more coming by the carload. He could see no place that was then, or would be, undisturbed. The long road with grassy sides gave big promises of leading somewhere to the quiet retreat he sought. Telling the driver that if he were not back by six, he would be waiting down the road, Mickey started on

Mickey stopped and studied the gentle breeze crossed the clover field be freshed him in its passing. He sucke lifted his cap, shaking the hair from was so delightful he stuffed the cap i walked slowly along, intending to stop house and ask for water. But the fir Mickey's liking. He went on and t another. Then he came to land that a fences were so straight. The corners they were empty, so delightful where t alder, wild plum, hawthorn; attractive of the bushes that were field and orch the barn and outbuildings looked so no grazing cattle in rank meadows were s big white house began to peep from t hushes and trees

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nome like it closely. He walked slowly, looking right d left, drinking in the perfect quiet, peace, and rest. scarcely could realize that there were places in the orld where families lived alone like this. He tried to ink how he would feel if he belonged there, and when he ached the place where he saw Lily on a comfort under big bloom-laden pear tree, his throat grew hard, his eyes y and his feet heavy. Then the screen to the front door rung back and a smiling woman in a tidy gingham dress me through and stood awaiting Mickey.

"I just told Peter when he came back alone, I bet a enny you'd got off at the wrong stop!" she cried. "I'm glad you found your way by yourself. But you must e tired and hot walking. Come right in and have a glass milk, and strip your feet and I'll ring for Junior."

For one second Mickey was dazed. The next, he knew hat it must mean. These people were the kind whom od had made so big and generous they divided home and mmer with tenement children from the big city thirty iles away. Some boy was coming for a week, maybe, to what exactly filled Mickey's idea of Heaven, but he as not the boy.

"'Most breaks my heart to tell you," he said, "but I a't the boy you're expecting. I'm just taking a walk d I thought maybe you'd let me have a drink. I've unted one past the last three houses, but none looked if they'd have half such good, cool water as this."

"Now don't that beat the nation!" exclaimed the pman. "The Multiopolis papers are just oozing sym-

it's funny! But you wanted water, co

Mickey followed a footpath white around the big house and standing bes while the woman stepped to the bacl He took it and drank slowly.

"Thank you ma'am," he said as he l turned to the path.

Yesterday had weakened his nerve. cry again. He took a quick step forwards beside him, her hand on his sho

"Wait a minute," she said. "Sit c the pear tree. I want to ask you som and rest until I come back."

Mickey leaned against the tree, shut with all his might. He was too big t would think him a coward as Mr. Bruc happened as they actually do at times

his shoulder. "Now doesn't it beat the band?" she said, to the backyard in general. "Just a little fellow not in long trousers yet, and bearing such a burden he can't talk. I guess maybe God has a hand in this. I'm not so sure my boy hasn't come after all. Who are you, and where are you going, and don't you want to send your ma word you will stay here a week with me?"

Mickey lifted a bewildered face.

"Why, I couldn't, lady," he said brokenly, but gaining control as he went on. "I must work. Mr. Bruce needs me. I'm a regular plute compared with most of the 'newsies'; you wouldn't want to do anything for me who has so much; but if you're honestly thinking about taking a boy and he hasn't come, how would you like to have a little girl in his place? A little girl about so long, and so wide, with a face like Easter church flowers, and rings of gold on her head, and who wouldn't be half the trouble a boy would, because she hasn't ever walked, so she couldn't get into things."

"Oh my goodness! A crippled little girl?"

"She isn't crippled," said Mickey. "She's as straight as you are, what there is of her. She had so little food, and care, her back didn't seem to stiffen, and her legs won't walk. She wouldn't be half so much trouble as a boy. Honest, dearest lady, she wouldn't!"

"Who are you?" asked the woman.

Mickey produced a satisfactory pedigree, and gave unuestionable references which she recognized, for she slowly added at the names of Chaffner and Bruce. "And who is the little girl you are asking me to take?" Mickey studied the woman and then began to talk, utiously at first. Ashamed to admit the squalor and e awful truth of how he had found the thing he loved, en gathering courage he began what ended in an outuring. The woman watched him and listened and when ickey had no further word: "She is only a tiny girl?" e asked wonderingly.

"The littlest girl you ever saw," said Mickey.

"Perfectly helpless?" marvelled the woman.

"Oh no! She can sit up and use her hands," said Mickey. She can feed herself, and write on her slate, and learn r lessons. It's only that she stays put. She has to be ted if she's moved."

"You lift her?" queried the woman.

"Could with one hand," said Mickey tersely.

THE ADVENT OF NANCY AND PETER 260 per, and then she says her lesson, and her prayers and goes

to sleep. So you see it's mostly her waiting on me. A boy

couldn't be less trouble than that, could he?"

"It doesn't seem like it," said the woman, "and no matter how much bother she was. I guess I could stand it for a week, if she's such a little girl, and can't walk. The difficulty is this: I promised my son Junior a boy and his heart is so set. He's wild about the city. He's going to be gone before we know it. He doesn't seem to care for anything we have, or do. I don't know just what he hoped to get out of a city boy; but I promised him one. Then I felt scared and wrote Mr. Chaffner how it was and asked him to send me a real nice boy who could be trusted. If it wasn't for Junior-Mary and the Little Man would be delighted-"

"Well never mind," said Mickey. "I'll go see the Nurse Lady and maybe she can think of a plan. Anyway I don't know as it would be best for Lilv. If she came here a week, seems like it would kill me to take her back, and I don't know how she'd bear staying alone all day, after she had got used to company. And pretty soon now it's going to get so hot, top floors in the city, that if she had a week like this, going back would make her sick."

"You must give me time to think," said the woman. "Peter will soon be home to supper and I'll talk it over with him and with Junior and see what they think. Where could you be found in Multiopolis? We drive in every few days. We like to go ourselves, and there's no

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her way to satisfy the children. They get so tired and nesome in the country."

Mickey was aghast. "They do? Why it doesn't seem pssible! I wish I could trade jobs with Junior for a while. That is his work?"

"He drives the creamery wagon," answered the woman.
"O Lord!" Mickey burst forth. "Excuse me ma'am, I ean— Oh my! Drives a real live horse along these reets and gathers up the cream cans we pass at the tes, and takes them to the trolley?"

"Yes," she said.

"And he'd give up that job for blacking somebody's oes, or carrying papers, or running errands, or being ut up all summer in a big hot building! Oh my!"

"When will you be our way again?" asked the woman.
I'll talk this over with Peter. If we decided to try the
tle girl and she did the 'waiting' as you say, she couldn't

make him so sick he'd never want to see a city again while his palpitator was running."

"Hu'umh!" said the lady slowly, her eyes on far distance. "Let me think! I don't know but that would be a fine thing for all of us. We have land enough for a nice farm for both boys, and the way things look now, land seems about as sure as anything; we could give them a farm apiece when we are done with it, and the girl the money to take to her home when she marries—I would love to know that Junior was going to live on land as his father does; but all his life he's talked about working in the city when he grows up. Hu'umh!"

"Well if you want him cured of that, gimme the job," he grinned. "You see lady, I know the city, inside out and outside in again. I been playing the game with it since I can remember. You can't tell me anything I don't know about the lowest, poorest side of it. Oh I could tell you things that would make your head swim. If you want your boy dosed just sick as a horse on what a workingman gets in Multiopolis 'tween Sunrise Alley and Biddle Boulevard, just you turn him over to me a week. I'll fix him. I'll make the creamery job look like 'Lijah charioteering for the angels to him, honest I will lady; and he won't ever know it, either. He'll come through with a lump in his neck, and a twist in his stummick that means home and mother. See?"

The woman looked at Mickey in wide-eyed and openmouthed amazement: "Well if I ever!" she gasped.

"If you don't believe me, try it," said Mickey.

papers. They're jumping their jobs day, while hundreds of Schmeltzenschin ertys, Hansons, and Pietros are coming places. Multiopolis is more than half louts from across the ocean now, instead cradles, as it should be. If Junior has for Multiopolis that is going to cut him place like this, and bossing his own jo cook him! Cook him quick!"

"Would you come here?" she quest "Would I?" cried Mickey. "Well tr

"Would I?" cried Mickey. "Well tr "I'm deeply interested in what you sa she said. "I'll talk it over to-night with "Well I don't know," said Mickey. the grand kibosh on it. Hard! But if asking polite for his mush and milk, Christmas pennies for the privilege of

opolis, which will be soon. I'd like to see your Lily before I make any promises, and if I thought I could manage, I would bring her right out in the car. Tell me where to find you, and I'll see what Peter thinks."

Mickey grinned widely. "You ain't no suffragette lady, are you?" he commented.

"Well I don't know about that," said the lady. "There are a good many things to think of these days."

"Yes I know," said Mickey, "but as long as everything you say swings the circle and rounds up with Peter, it's no job to guess what's most important in your thinktank. Peter must be some pumpkins!"

"Come to think of it, he is, Mickey," she said. "Come to think of it, I do sort of revolve around Peter. We always plan together. Not that we always think alike: there are some things I just can't make Peter see, that I wish I could; but I wouldn't trade Peter—"

"No I guess you wouldn't," laughed Mickey. "I guess he's top crust."

"He is so!" said the woman. "How did you say I could reach you?"

"Well, the easiest way would be this. Here, I'll write the number for you."

"Fine!" said the woman. "I'll hurry through my shopping and call you—when would it suit you best?"

"Never mind me," said Mickey. "For this, I'll come when you say."

"What about three in the afternoon, then?"

"Sure!" cried Mickey. "Suits me splendid! Mostly

you see a little white girl that hasn't e up at you shy and timid, like a baby under a leaf, you'll just pick her up on your heart, and you'll want to sti I do; and you won't be any more an: Homes and Charity Palaces to swallow not a bit! All I must think of is what coming. She's never been out of my her, and she hasn't seen any one but M be afraid, and worried. You! Why your prayer bones just like he was. of you! What I'm up against is what and how I'm going to take her back when it will be hotter there and lor. Gee, I do get up against it. I'll stop night and talk it over with the Sunshin "You surely give one things to tl "The command in the good book is plain: 'Bear ye one another's burdens,'" quoted the woman.

"Oh yes! 'Burdens,' of course!" agreed Mickey. "But that couldn't mean Lily, 'cause she's nothing but joy! Just pure joy! All about her is that a fellow loves her so, that it keeps him laying awake at nights thinking how to do what would be best for her. She's mine, and I'm going to keep her; that's the surest thing you know. If I take you to see Lily, and if I decide to let you have her a few days to rest her and fresh her up, you wouldn't go and want to put her 'mong the Orphings' Home kids, would you? You wouldn't think she ought to be took from me and raised in a flock of every kind, from every place. Would you lady?"

"No, I wouldn't," said the lady. "I see how you feel, and I am sure I wouldn't want that for one of mine."

"Well, there's no question about her being mine!" said Mickey. "But I like you so, maybe I'll let you help me a little. A big boy that can run and play doesn't need you, dearest lady, half so much as my little girl. Do you think he does?"

"No, I think the Lord sent you straight here, and if you don't stop I'll be so worked up I can't rest, and I may come to-morrow."

Mickey arose and held out his hand.

"Thank you dearest lady," he said. "I must be getling out where the car won't pass without my seeing

"You wait at the gate a minute," she said, "I want to

MICHAEL O'HALLORAN

nd in a little basket of things to-night. I'll have it ady in a jiffy."

Mickey slowly walked to the gate. When the woman me with a basket covered with a white cloth, he thanked r again and as he took it, he rested his head against her m and smiled up at her with his wide true eyes.

"A thing I can't understand is," he said, "why when the ord was making mothers, he didn't cut all of them from e same piece he did you. I'll just walk on down the ad and smell June beside this clover field. Is it yours?" "Yes," she said.

"Would you care if I'd climb the fence and take just a w to Lily?" asked Mickey. "They smell so sweet, and know she never saw any."

"Take a bunch as big as your head if you want them,"
id the woman.

but lately he changed his mind, and sitting up makes him taller, and smiling makes him pleasanter; and Mr. Bruce—why you'd know him anywhere! You could pick him out at Chicago or Philadelphia. Just look for the finest man you ever saw, if you are out when he goes by, and that will be Mr. Douglas Bruce."

"I guess I'll know him if I happen to be out," said the lady. "I just wondered if I would."

"Sure lady, you couldn't miss him," replied Mickey.

Carefully holding his basket he went down the road. The woman made supper an hour late standing beside the gate watching for a green car with an alert driver. Many whirled past and at last one with the right look came gliding along; then she stepped out and raised her hand for a parley. The man smiled, said a word to the chauffeur, and the car stopped.

"Mr. Douglas Bruce?" she asked.

"At your service, Madam!" he answered.

"Just a word with you," she said.

He arose instantly, swung open the car door, and stepping down walked with her to the shade of a big widely branching maple. The woman looked at him, and smiled such a pleasant smile, and then she said flushing and half confused: "Please to excuse me for halting you, but I had a reason. This afternoon such an attractive little fellow stopped here to ask for a drink in passing. Now Peter and I had decided we'd try our hand at taking a city boy for a week or so for his vacation, and twice Peter has left his work and gone to the trolley station to fetch him, and

"I've noticed that," put in the man.
"Yes," she said, "anybody would see thing. So I thought it was the boy I wing, and I went right at the job. He tol that I was mistaken, but I could see Someway I'd trust him with my chara but I got to be perfectly sure before I children. You see I have three, and if wrong, I don't want it to be because thought I'd like to have him around so is bigger, but just about his age. He so this way with you this summer and I in, and do what I could to entertain him to inquire of you—"

"I see!" said Douglas Bruce. "I hav so long, but owing to the circumstanc him, and the association with him s

"Then I won't detain you further," she said. "Thank you very much."

Mickey, cheered in mind and heart, had walked ahead briskly with his basket, and as he went he formulated his plans. He would go straight to the Sunshine Nurse and tell her about the heat and this possible chance to take Lily to the country for a week, and consult with her as to what the effect of the trip might be, and what he could do with her afterward, and then he would understand better. He kept watching the clover field beside the way, and when he decided he had reached the finest, best perfumed place, he saw a man plowing on the other side of the fence and thought it might be Peter and that Peter would wonder what he was doing in his field, so Mickey set the basket in a corner and advanced.

He was wonderfully elated by what had happened to him and the conclusions at which he had arrived, as he came across the deep grasses beside the fence where the pink of wild rose and the snow of alder commingled, where song aparrows trilled, and larks and quail were calling. He approached smiling in utter confidence, and as he looked at the man, at his height, his strong open face, his grip on the plow, he realized why the world of the little woman revolved around Peter. Mickey could have conceived of few happier fates than being attached to Peter, and he thought in amazement of the boy who wanted to leave him. Then a slow grin spread over his face, and by this time Peter had stopped his horses and was awaiting him with an answering smile and hand outstretched.

boy who had been sent to visit you glad hand too. I wish I was in his s your boy. Gee, your lady is a nice g

"You're all correct there," agreed are not the boy who was to be sent wish you were. I'm disappointed. you coming down the road, and the w and stepped up so brisk and neat too

"I been 'stepping up brisk and neaerrands, hop cars, dodge cars and auting fire-escapes instead of stairs, and foot since I can remember," laughed I on the streets of Multiopolis to step without knowing you are doing it."

"You're a newsboy?" asked Peter
"I was all my life 'til a few day
"Then I went into the office of Mr. I

sweat for you," said Mickey. "Just now he's after some of them big office-holders who are bleeding the taxpayers of Multiopolis, and some of these days if you watch your Herald sharp, you're going to see the lid fly off of two or three things at once. He's on a hot trail now."

"Why I have seen that in the papers," said Peter. "He was given the job of finding who is robbing the city, by James Minturn; I remember his name. And you work for him? Well, well! Sit down here and tell me about it."

"I can't now," said Mickey. "I must get back to the toad. His car may pass any minute, and I'm to be ready. Your pleasant lady said I might take a few clover flowers to my little sick girl, and just as I came to the finest ones in the field, I saw you and I thought maybe I'd better tell you what I was doing, so you wouldn't fire me."

"Sure!" said Peter. "Take all you want. I'd like to send the whole field, larks and all, to a little sick girl. I'd like especial to send her some of these clowny bobolink fellows to puff up and spill music by the quart for her; I guess nothing else runs so smooth except water."

"I don't know what she'd say," said Mickey gazing around him. "You see she hasn't ever walked and all she's seen in her life has been the worst kind of bare, dark tenement walls, 'til lately she's got a high window where the can see sky, and a few sparrows that come for crumbs. This!"—Mickey swept his arm across the landscape—"I don't know what she'd say to this!"

"Pshaw, now!" cried Peter. "Why bring her out! You bring her right out! That's what we been wanting

know. Just what a city child would think of country ngs she'd never seen before. Bring her to see us!"

'She's a little bit of a thing and she can't walk, you ow," explained Mickey.

"Poor little mite! That's too bad," lamented Peter. Vonder if she couldn't be doctored up some. It's a ame she can't walk, but taking care of her must be sy!"

'Oh she takes care of herself," said Mickey. "You see is alone all day from six 'til six; she must take care of self, so she studies her lesson, and plays with her doll nean her Precious Child."

'Too bad!" said Peter. "By jacks that's a sin! Did u happen to speak to Ma about her?"

'We did talk a little," admitted Mickey. "She was ling me of the visitor boy who didn't come, and your son a doesn't think he'll want to stay; so we got to talking true as that 'one half doesn't know how the other half lives.' I've heard that, but I didn't quite sense it, and I don't know as I do yet. You bring her right out!"

"Your pleasant lady talked about that; but you see bringing her out and showing her these things, and getting her used to them is one thing; then taking her back to a room so hot I always sleep on the fire-escape, and where she has to stay all day alone, is another. I don't know but so long as she must go back to what she has now, it would be better to leave her there."

"Humph! I see! What a pity!" exclaimed Peter. "Well, if you'll be coming this way again, stop and see us. I'll talk to Ma about her. We often take a little run to Multiopolis. Junior wouldn't be satisfied till we got a car, and I can't say we ain't enjoying it ourselves. It does give one the grandest sense of getting there."

"Makes you feel like Johnny on the spot?"

"It does so!" agreed Peter. "And what was that you were saying about my boy not thinking he'll stay?"

"She told me," said Mickey, "about the city bug he had in his system. Why don't you swat it immediate?"

"What do you mean?" inquired Peter.

"Turn him over to me a week or two," suggested Mickey. "I can give him a dose of working in a city that will send him hiking back to home and father."

"It's worth considering," said Peter.

"I know that what I got of Multiopolis would make me feel like von Hindenberg if I had the job of handling the ribbons of your creamery wagon; and so I know about what ure in it; and I had supposed my boys.

Do you really think you could manage

Do you really think you could manag "Sure," said Mickey. "Only, if you

now, nor ever, do you want son to ke

"Well I'll be jiggered!" laughed Pe could do it, if you went at it right."

"Well you trust me to do it right, "Loan me sonny for a week or two, and back for keeps."

"Well it's worth trying," said Peter you be back this way?"

"'Most any day," said Mickey. "she'd be in Multiopolis soon, so we happy meeting before long. I think car coming. Good-byé! Be good to

With a spring from where he was sta



"Mickey has the best of three or four boys concealed in his lean person"



fe went to the front veranda for their usual evening visit, d talk over the day, she had very little to tell him.

As was her custom, she removed her apron, brushed her aving hair and wore a fresh dress. She rocked gently in r wicker chair, and her voice was moved to unusual licitude as she spoke. Peter also had performed a rite spoke of as "brushing up" for evening. He believed the efficacy of soap and water, and his body, as well as his othing, was clean. He sat on the top step leaning against e pillar and the moonlight emphasized his big frame, cented the strong lines of his face and crowned his thick uir, as Nancy Harding thought it should be, with glory. "Peter," she said, "did you notice anything about that by, this afternoon, different from other boys?"

"Yes," answered Peter slowly, "I did Nancy. He dn't strike me as being one boy. He has the best of ree or four concealed in his lean person."

"He's had a pretty tough time, I judge," said Nancy. "Yet you never saw a boy who took your heart like he d, and neither did I," answered Peter.

Mickey holding his basket and clover flowers was waitg when the car drew up, and to Bruce's inquiry answered lat a lady where he stopped for a drink had given him mething for Lily. He left the car in the city, sought he nurse and luckily found her at leisure. She listened ith the greatest interest to all he had to say.

"It's a problem," she said, as he finished. "To take to such a place for a week, and then bring her back here she is, would be harder for her than never going."

Have I got the right to let it go a day money myself, when some one else shine Lady, or Mr. Bruce, would do her in an Orphings' Home, either?"

"No Mickey, you haven't!" said t
"Just the way I have it figured,"
she's mine, and I'm going to keep
fixed, I'm going to have it done. I
else meddling with my family. You
thing from the Carrel man yet?"

"No," she said.

"My, I wish he'd come!" cried Mi
"So do I," said the nurse. "But so
you are doing all right. If she mus
have to be put in condition for it; a
could beat you at your job, I am pos
passing what she did have."

- "Well I can't!" interposed Mickey.
- "Just for a while!" continued the nurse.
- "Not for a minute!" cried Mickey. "I found her! She's mine!"
 - "Yes, I know; but-" began the nurse.
- "I know too," said Mickey. "Gimme a little time." Mickey studied the problem till he reached his grocery. There he thriftily lifted the cloth and peeped, and with a sigh of satisfaction pursued his way. Presently he opened his door, to be struck by a wave of hot air and to note a flushed little face and drawn mouth as he went into Peaches' outstretched arms. Then he delivered the carefully carried clover and the following:

"I got these from a big, pink field bewildering, That God made a-purpose for cows and childering. Her share is being consumed by the cow, Let's go roll in ours right now."

"Again!" demanded Peaches.

Mickey repeated slowly.

- "How could we?" asked Peaches.
- "Easy!" said Mickey.
- "'Easy?'" repeated Peaches.
- "Just as easy!" reiterated Mickey.
- "Did you see it?" demanded Peaches.
- "Yes, I saw it to-day," said Mickey. "It's like this: you see some folks live in houses all built together, and work at selling things to eat, and wear, and making things, and doing other work that must be done like doc-

chere was the nicest lady; we talked our supper in that pretty basket; clovers from a big pink field so sweet make you sick; and there are trees of birds sing, and there are wild re flowers; and it's quiet 'cept the bi crowing, and the wind comes in litt.' you, and such milk!"

"Better 'an our milk?" asked Peac "Their milk is so rich it makes o house relation," scoffed Mickey.

"Tell me more," demanded Peach "Wait 'til I get the water to wash y Lily," he said.

"Yes, it's getting some hot; but 't the rags last summer. It's like a rea "A pretty warm lady, just the san chickens, the big cool porch, the wonderful woman and man, and the boy whom they expected and who did not come; and then cautiously, slowly, making sure she understood, he developed his plan to take her to the country. Peaches drew back and opened her lips. Mickey promptly laid the washcloth over them.

"Now don't begin to say you 'won't' like a silly baby," he said. "Try it and see, and if you don't like it, you can come right back. You want to ride in a grand automobile like a millyingaire lady, don't you? All the swells go away to the country for the summer, you got to be a swell lady! I ain't going to have you left way behind!"

"Mickey, would you be there?" she asked.

"Yes lady, I'd be right on the job!" said Mickey. "I'd be there a lot more than I am here. You go the week they wanted that boy, and he didn't come; then if you like it, I'll see if they won't board you, and you can have a nice little girl to play with, and a fat, real baby, and a boy bigger than me—and you should see Peter!"

Peaches opened her lips, Mickey reapplied the cloth.

"Calm down now!" he ordered. "I've decided to do it. We got to hump ourselves. This is our *chance*. Why there's milk, and butter, and eggs, and things to eat there like you never tasted, and to have a cool breeze, and to lie on the grass—"

"Oh Mickey, could I?" cried Peaches.

"Sure silly! Why not?" said Mickey. "There's big fields of it, and the cows don't need it all. You can lie on the grass, or the clover, and hear the birds, and play with

as blood, yes ma'am, and yellow as o blue like this ribbon and dark blue I 'til I fix you—and such singing!"

"Mickey, would you hold me?" was "Smash anybody that lays a finger say so," said Mickey promptly.

"And you'd stay a whole day?" the

"And you'd stay a whole day?" she "Sure!" cried Mickey.

"An' if I was afraid you'd bring me b "Sure! Right away!" he promised "An' they wouldn't anybody 'get' r

"'Way out there 'mong the clover!
"Why it's here they'll 'get' you if they body out there wants you, but me."

"Mickey, when will you take me?" s
"Before so very long," promised Mick
be surprised to hear me coming with the

"Yes Mickey, and 'fore you came I didn't want any upper at all, and now I do," said Peaches.

"You were too warm honey," said Mickey, instantly lert. "We'll just fix this old hot city. We'll run right way from it. See? Now we'll have the grandest supper re ever had."

Mickey brought water, plates, and forks, and opened he basket. Peaches bolstered with her pillows cried out nd marvelled. There was a quart bottle of milk wrapped n a wet cloth. There was a big loaf of crusty brown country bread. There was a small blue bowl of yellow butter, square of honey even yellower, a box of strawberries, and some powdered sugar, and a little heap of sliced, cold wiled ham. Mickey surveyed the table.

"Now Miss Chicken, here's how!" he warned. "I found 70u all warm and feverish. If you load up with this, 70u'll be sick sure. You get a cup of milk, a slice of bread and butter, some berries and a teeny piece of meat. We an live from this a week, if the heat doesn't spoil it."

"You fix me," said Peaches, and Mickey answered, 'All right."

Then they had such a supper as they neither one ever ad known, during which Mickey explained wheat fields nd bread, bees and honey, cows and clover, pigs and ham, she understood them. Peaches repeated her lesson and er prayers and then as had become her custom, demanded hat Mickey write his last verse on the slate, so she might earn and copy it on the morrow. She was asleep before e finished. Mickey walked softly, cleared the table,

I saw in papers I sold how you put differer little white flowersy-girl that hasn't ever w Nurse Lady told me at the "Star of Hope" times, and the next time you come, I guess girl; and maybe I'll have you fix her back. know that to fix her back would be the bigs ever could do. I got a job that I can pay he two dollars a week for you. I couldn't pay a steady; and if you'd lose all you have in any handy to have that much skating in steady a as long as you say, and soon as I can, I'll ma got, or ever can get, to cure Lilv's back, and | I'd like you to fix her. I do hope you will c don't wish anybody else would get sick so you if I am square of Mr. Douglas Bruce, Irique Indiana, or of Mr. Chaffner, editor of the h sold since I was big enough.

N

CHAPTER XII

FEMININE REASONING

"I can furnish the logic for one family and most men I know feel qualified to do the same." James Minturn.

ITH vigour renewed by a night of rest Leslie began her second day at Atwater Cabin. She had so many and such willing helpers that before noon she could find nothing more to do. After lunch she felt a desire to explore her new world. Choosing the shady side, she followed the road toward the club house, but one thought in her mind: she must return in time to take the car and meet Douglas Bruce as she had promised.

She felt elated, positively proud of herself that she had so planned her summer as to spend it with her father, and of course it was going to be delightful to have her lover with her so much. So going she came to a most attractive lane that led from the road between tilled fields, back to a wood on one side, and open pasture on the other. Faintly she heard the shouts of children, and yielding to sudden impulse she turned and followed the grassy path. A few more steps and she stopped in surprise. An automobile was standing on the bank of a brook. On an Indian blanket under a tree sat a woman of fine appearance hold-

balbriggan bathing suit, stood James filled with a big piece of sod which he a leak. Leslie untied the ribbons or rumpling her hair to the little bi laughing.

"Well Mr. Minturn!" she cried. become of the taxpayers of Multiopol pion builds a sod dam?"

Whether the flush on James Mintur to her was exertion, embarrassment, or Leslie could not decide; but she ren impulsive greeting, that she had been early morning meeting the day of the t the last occasion she had seen him. S things as she went forward. James his muddy hands and said laughingly in condition for our customary greeti

estest' playing in all the world; not the political game, not the money game, not anything called manly sport, just a day off with my boys, being a boy again. Heavens Leslie, I'm wild about it. I could scarcely sleep last night for eagerness to get started. But let me make you acquainted with my family. My sister, Mrs. Winslow, a friend of mine, Miss Leslie Winton; my sons' tutor, Mr. Tower; my little brother, William Minturn; my boys, Junior and Malcolm."

"Anyway, we can shake hands," said Leslie to Mrs. Winslow. "The habit is so ingrained I am scandalized on meeting people if I'm forced to neglect it."

"Will you share my blanket?" asked Mrs. Winslow.

"Thanks! Yes, for a little time," said Leslie. "I am greatly interested in what is going on here."

"So am I," said Mrs. Winslow. "We are engaged in the evolution of an idea. A real 'Do-the-boy's-hall."

"It seems to be doing them good," commented Leslie.

"Never mind the boys," said Mr. Minturn. "I object to such small men monopolizing your attention. Look at the 'good' this is doing me. And would you please tell me why you are here, instead of disporting yourself at, say Lenox?"

"How funny!" laughed Leslie. "I am out in search of amusement, and I'm finding it. I think I'm perhaps a mile from our home for the summer."

"You amaze me!" cried Mr. Minturn. "I saw Douglas this morning and told him where I was coming and he never said a word."

"He didn't know one to say on this subject," explained

sessed, so much so that I think he's ca

"I know he is," said Mr. Minturn. a plan to allow him to proceed with h then have the delightful ride, fishing Atwater morning and evening. How course Douglas will be there also?"

"Of course," agreed Leslie. "At les invitation. I'm going to surprise hin evening. How do you think he'll like

"I think he will be so overjoyed he express himself," said James Mintur going to be lonely for you? Won't you and your frocks, and your usual summ

"You forget," said Leslie. "My frocks always have been for winter. summered with father."

"How will you amuse vourself?" ha.

"That is an attractive subject," said Mr. Minturn. He came to her side and looked down at her: "Have you really made any progress?"

"Little more than verifying a few songs already recorded," replied Leslie. "I hear smatterings and snatches, but they are elusive, and I'm not always sure of the identity of the bird. But the subject is thrillingly tempting."

"It surely is," conceded Mr. Minturn. "I could see that Nellie was alert the instant you mentioned it. Come over here to the shade and tell me what you think and how far you have gone. You see I've undertaken the boys' education. Malcolm inherits his mother's musical ability to a wonderful degree. It is possible that he could be started on this, and so begin his work while he thinks he's playing."

Leslie walked to the spot indicated, far enough away that conversation would not interrupt Mrs. Winslow's reading, and near enough to watch the boys; she and Mr. Minturn sat on the grass and talked.

"It might be the very thing," said Leslie. "Whatever gives even a faint hope of attracting a boy to an educational subject is worth testing."

"One thing I missed, I always have regretted," said Mr. Minturn, "I never had educated musical comprehension. Nellie performed and sang so well, and in my soul I knew what I could understand and liked in music she scorned. Sometimes I thought if I only had known enough to appreciate the right thing at the right time, it might have formed a slender tie between us; so I

indisputably based upon it," answere "Did you and Nellie have any suc

"Indeed yes," replied Leslie. "W to hear exactly the song I had hop talked of many things and Nellie sett in her mind. When she went into t came out with an armload of laver she meant to carry to Elizabeth, as

she meant to carry to Elizabeth, as resolved to begin a new life with you like flying; that never had she been:

Leslie paused and glanced at J: seemed puzzled: "I don't underst matters now. Tell me about the bir "And it is what you admit you do

I must tell you of," said Leslie. "I' ribly afraid you didn't understand, some course vou wouldn't have taken

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and I don't think you do," persisted Leslie. "Now if you would be big enough to let me tell you how it was with her that day, and what she said to me, your mind would be perfectly at rest as to the course you have taken."

"My mind is 'perfectly at rest now as to the course I have taken," said Mr. Minturn. "I realize that a man should meet life as it comes to him. I endured mine in sweating humiliation for years, and I would have gone on to the end, if it had been a question of me only, but when the girl was sacrificed and the boys in a fair way to meet a worse fate than hers, the question no longer hinged on me. You have seen my sons during their mother's régime, when they were children of wealth in the care of servants; look at them now and dare to tell me that they are not greatly improved."

"Surely they are!" said Leslie. "You did right to rescue them from their environment; all the fault that lies with you so far is, that you did not do from the start what you are now doing. The thing that haunts me is this, Mr. Minturn, and I must get it out of my mind before I can sleep soundly again—you will let me tell you—you won't think me meddling in what must be dreadful heartache? Oh you won't, will you?"

"No, I won't," said Mr. Minturn, "but it is prolonging beartache to discuss this matter, and wasting time better used in the building of a sod dam—indeed Leslie, tell me about the birds."

"I will, if you'll answer one question," said Leslie.

"Dangerous, but I'll risk it," replied Mr. Minturn.

every time they love and marry thable, companionable one."

"Provided she be endowed with t common mother instinct enough to yes—I grant it, and glory in it," saican furnish logic for one family, and r qualified to do the same."

"Surely!" agreed Leslie. "You we the night she came from the tamara and she told me you had a little bo contents you had threatened to 'fre had a soul. I'll be logical and fair, question I first stipulated. Here it is you made sure she had a soul, worth tion, before you froze it?"

James Minturn's laugh was ugly to "My dear girl," he said. "I mad

go on with my own plan for personal happiness, until I know for sure if you perfectly understand that she came to you that night to confess to you her faults, errors, mistakes, sins, if need be, and ask you to take the head of your household, and to help her fashion each hour of her life anew. Did she have a chance to tell you all this?"

"No," said Mr. Minturn. "But it would have made no difference, if she had. It came too late."

"You have not the right to say that to any living, suffering human being!" protested Leslie.

"I have a perfect right to say it to her," said Mr. Minturn. "A right that would be justified in any court in the world, either of lawyers or people."

"Then thank God, Nellie gets her trial higher. He will understand, and forgive her."

"You don't know what she did," said Mr. Minturn. "What she stood before me and the officers of the law, and admitted she did."

"I don't care what she did! There were men forgiven on the cross; because they sincerely repented, God had mercy on them, and He will on her, and what's more, He won't have any on you, unless you follow His example and forgive when you are asked, by a woman as deeply repentant as she was."

"Her repentance comes too late," said Mr. Minturn with finality. "Her error is not reparable."

"There is no such thing as true repentance being too late," insisted Leslie. "You are distinctly commanded to forgive; you have got to do it! There is no error that

"What nonsense! James Mintu said Leslie. "That is a little too That is taking from the whole hum repent of and repair a mistake."

"There are some mistakes that c:
"I grant it," said Leslie. "There
ing one right now!"

"That's the most strictly feminimerad," said Mr. Minturn, with a sho "Thank you," retorted Leslie.

high, but I accept it. I ask nothing of fate than to be the most feminine of told you what I feel forced to. You your plans, knowing they are exactly out, hastily, but surely. She said a build from the foundations, which me

"You are fatuously mistaken!" sai

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courage to tell you this, and if you think I enjoy it, and if you think I don't wish I were a mile away——"

"I still maintain I know the lady better than you do," said Mr. Minturn. "But you are wonderful Leslie, and I always shall respect and honour you for your effort in our behalf. It does credit to your head and heart. I envy Douglas Bruce. If ever an hour of trial comes to you, I would feel honoured for a chance to prove to you how much I appreciate—"

"Don't talk like that!" wailed Leslie. "It's all a failure if you do! Promise me that you will think this over. Let me send you the note Nellie wrote me before she went away. Won't you try to imagine what she is suffering to-day, in the change from what she went to you hoping, and what she received at your hands?"

"Let me see," said James Minturn. "At this hour she is probably enduring the pangs of wearing the most tasteful afternoon gown on the veranda of whatever summer resort suits her variable fancy, also the discomfiture of the woman she induced to bid high and is now winning from at bridge. I am particularly intimate with her forms of suffering; you see I judge them by my own and my children's during the past years."

"Then you think I'm not sincere?" asked Leslie.

"Surely, my dear girl!" said Mr. Minturn. "With all my heart I believe you! I know you are loyal to her, and to me! It isn't you I disbelieve, child, it is my wife."

"But I've told you over and over that she's changed."

"And I refuse to believe in her power to undergo the

"Small plain rooms, wait on her house and lawn at all times—Nellie me!" he said.

"There's no amusement in it for edy," said Leslie. "She is willing change, you are denying her the opp

"You don't think deeply enough!"
pose, knowing her as I do, I agreed
house. Suppose I filled it with serand ruin and make snobs of the boys
in a fiasco all around, and bring m
thing I have been through once, in
The present is too good for the boy
are my first consideration."

"So I see," said Leslie. "Nellie ticle and she is their mother, and one to the situation, she was hungry to

"And I'll promise you this: I'll go back to the hateful subject, just when I felt I was free from it. I'll think on both sides, and I'll weigh all you've said. If I see a glimmering, I will do this much—I will locate her, and learn how genuine was the change you witnessed, and I rather think I'll manage for you to see also. Will that satisfy you?"

"That will make me radiant, because the change I witnessed was genuine, and I know that wherever Nellie is to-day and whatever she is doing, she is still firm as when she left me in her desire for reparation toward you and her sons. Please, Mr. Minturn, think fast, and find her quickly."

"Leslie, you're incorrigible! Go bring Douglas to his surprise. He has a right to be happy."

"So have you," insisted Leslie. "More than he, because you have had such deep sorrow. Good-bye and please do hurry!"

Then Leslie took leave of the others, returned to the cabin, and hurried to her room to dress for her trip to bring her lover. Douglas Bruce was waiting when she stopped at the Iriquois and his greeting was joyous, to such an extent that Leslie felt she must be very nice, to make up for the time he had missed her. Mr. Winton was cordial, but Douglas noticed that he seemed tired and worried, and inquired if he were working unusually hard. He replied that he was, and beginning to feel the neat a little.

"Then we will drive to the country before dinner to pol off," said Leslie, seeing her opportunity.

"I think not," she answered. "
is one of my best loved drives. I
taken the road to the club house, or

They began a gentle ascent and d stretched the blue water of a lake.

"Is here where we take the plung "No indeed!" answered Leslie. " gather such momentum that we sl and alight on the opposite bank wit your landing neatly, Rogers!"

"Why have we never been her Douglas. "I don't remember any inviting. Just look ahead here! picture!"

He indicated a vine of creeping over gold sand, its rough, deeply se artistic cutting, with tufts of snow was he who wrote, 'A running blackberry would adorn the parlours of Heaven.'"

"And so it would!" exclaimed Douglas. "What a frieze that would make for a dining-room! Have you ever seen it used?"

"Never," answered Leslie, "or many other of our most exquisite forms of wild growth."

"What beautiful country!" Douglas commented a minute later as the car sped from the swamp, ran uphill, and down the valley between stretches of tilled farm land on either side, sloping back to the lakes now growing distant, and then creeping up a gradual incline until Atwater lashed into sight.

"Man! That's fine!" he said, rising in the car to better admire the view, at which Leslie signalled the driver to am slower. "I don't remember that I ever saw anything quite so attractive as this. And if ever water invited a mimmer—that white sand bed seems to extend as far into the lake as you can see. Jove! Wasn't that a black under that thorn bush?"

Leslie's eyes were shining and her laugh was as joyous any of the birds. He need not say more. There was a atching suit in his room; in ten minutes he could be cleaved the water to the opposite shore and have time to return before dinner. The car sped down where the road an level with the water, and a flock of waders arose and arcled the lake. On the right was the orchard, the newly nade garden, the tiny cabin with green lawn, hammocks winging between trees, Indian blankets spread, and the

and Dad while you run and reform home, Douglas!"

He slowly looked around, then at "Do you believe her?" he asked:

"Yes indeed! Leslie has the far And I'm one day ahead of you. Sh night. Hurry into your bathing su fore dinner, and then we'll fish. It morning! I'm sure you'll enjoy it

"Enjoy it!" cried Douglas. "He of our language is made manifest."

Too happy herself for the right Douglas to the clean little room, we row of hooks against the wall, on o bathing suit; then she went to put hurried to the lake.

"You are happy here, Leslie?" as

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"Go on and tell, 'Bearer of Morning,'" he said. "I

"Right over there, on the road to the club house, while 'seeking new worlds to conquer' this afternoon, I ran into James Minturn wearing a bathing suit, to his knees in mud and water, building a sod dam for his boys."

"You did?" cried Douglas.

"I did!" said Leslie. "Here's the picture: a beautiful winding stream, big trees like these on the banks, shade and flowers, birds, and air a-plenty, a fine appearing woman he introduced as his sister, a Minturn boy catching fish with his bare hands on either bank, the brother Minturn must have adopted legally, since he gave him his name—"

"He did," interrupted Douglas. "He told me so---"

"I was sure of it," said Leslie. "And an interesting young man, a tutor, bringing up more sod; the boys acted quite like any other agreeably engaged children—but Minturn himself, looking like a man I never saw before, down in the sand and water building a sod dam—a sod dam I'm telling you——"

"I've noticed what you were telling me," cried Douglas." It is duly impressing me. 'Dam' is all I can think of."

"It's no wonder!" exclaimed Leslie.

"What did he say to you?" queried Douglas.

"It wasn't necessary for him to say anything," said reslie. "I could see. He is making over his boys and in reder to do it sympathetically, and win their confidence and love, he is being a boy himself again. And he has he little chaps under control now. There is love and ad"The remainder of his family alwa herself to the exclusion of everything told me; I imagine she is still doing it cess," hazarded Douglas.

"It amazes me how men can be sc

"So you talked to him about her?'

"I surely did!" asserted Leslie.

"And I'll wager you wasted words
"Not one!" cried the girl. "He wi
I spoke, and if I don't hear of him
soon, I'll find another occasion, and
divide the pleasure of remaking th
mother."

"She will respectfully—I mean di "You don't believe she was in ears to me then?" asked the girl.

"I am quite sure she was," he ar

watched her soul come out white. You have got to promise me that if ever he talks to you, you won't say anything against her. Will you?"

"It would be a temptation," he said. "Minturn is a different man."

"So is she a different woman! Come on Dad, we are waiting for you," called Leslie. "What kept you so?"

"A paper fell from my pocket, and I picked it up and in glancing at it I became interested in a thought that hadn't occurred to me before, and I forgot. You must forgive your old Daddy; his hands are about full these days. Between my job for the city, and my own affairs, and those of a friend, I have all I can carry. Now let me forget business. I call this great of the girl. And one of the biggest appeals to me is the bill of fare. I had a dinner for a king last night. What have we to-night?"

"But won't anticipation spoil it?" she asked.

"Not a particle," he declared.

"It's the fish we caught last night, baked potatoes, cress salad from Minturn's brook, strawberries from Atwaters, cream from our rented cow, real clover cream, Mrs. James says, and biscuit. That's all."

"Glory!" cried Mr. Winton. "Doesn't that thrill you? Let's head for the tallest tamarack of the swamp and then have a feast."

In line they leisurely swam abreast across the lake. In the opposite bank they rested a few minutes, then returned to dinner. Afterward, with Rogers rowing for Mr. Winton, and Leslie for Douglas, they went bass fishing. returned to the Minturns and secu Douglas that if Mr. Minturn talked would say nothing to discourage I sincerity of his wife's motives. Leturned to the surprise Douglas had me

"Oh, that pretty girl?" he inquired

"Yes, Lily," she said. "Of course see her! Is she really a lovable child, could you get any idea of what is he

Douglas carefully reeled and look speculative smile. "You refuse to co young lady of greater beauty than seen?" he queried.

"Absolutely! Don't waste time on "You'll have to begin again and give he laughed. "What was your first?"
"Is she really a lovable child?" rep

"The one you have given—that he adores her," conceded Leslie. "The next was, 'Is she attractive?"

"Wonderfully!" cried Douglas. "And what she would be in health with flesh to cover her bones and colour on her lips and cheeks is now only dimly foreshadowed."

"She must have her chance," said Leslie. "I was thinking of her to-day. I'll go to see her at once and bring her here. I will get the best surgeon in Multiopolis to examine her and a nurse if need be, and then Mickey can come out with you."

"Would you really, Leslie?" asked Douglas.

"But why not?" cried she. "That's one of the things worth while in the world."

"And I'd love to go halvers with you," proposed Dougis las. "Let's do it! When will you go to see her?"

"In a few days," said Leslie. "The last one was, 'Could you get any idea of what is the trouble?"

"Very little," said Douglas. "She can sit up and move her hands. He is teaching her to read and write. She had her lesson very creditably copied out on her slate-She practises in his absence on poems Mickey makes."

"Poems?" marvelled Leslie.

"Doggerel," explained Douglas. "Four lines at a time. Some of it is pathetic, some of it is witty, some of it pretages possibilities. He may make a poet. She requires werse each evening, and he recites it and writes it out, and she uses it for copy the next day. The finished product is to have a sky-blue cover and be decorated either with an English sparrow, the only bird she has seen, or a "She has been on the street twice knows of," answered Douglas. "It to take her, and cure her if it can be d to consult Mickey. She is his find, belligerently, I might warn you!"

"Claims her! He has her?" marve "Surely! In his room! On his be her himself, and doing a mighty fine ever had I am quite sure," said Dougl "But Douglas!" cried Leglie in agent

"But Douglas!" cried Leslie in ama "But me no buts,' my lady!" wa know what you would say. Save it! thing that way. Mickey is right. Sh her in her last extremity, in rags, on corner of an attic. He carried her hon to a clean bed his mother left him. Sin gallant little knight, lying on the floor ding, feeding her first and uestioned, as it will be the minute she is taken to a sureon or a hospital."

"How old is she?" asked Leslie.

"Neither of them knows. About ten, I should think."

"How has he managed to keep her hidden this long?"

"He lives in an attic. The first woman he tried to et help from started the Home question, and frightened im; so he appealed to a nurse he met through being conected with an accident; she gave him supplies, instrucons and made Lily gowns."

"But why didn't she-?" began Leslie.

"She may have thought the child was his sister," said louglas. "She's the loveliest little thing, Leslie!"

"Very little?" asked Leslie.

"Tiny is the word," said Douglas. "It's the prettiest ight I ever saw to watch him wait on her, and to see er big, starved, scared eyes follow him with adoring rust."

"Adoration on both sides, then," laughed Leslie.

"You imply I'm selecting too big words," said Douglas. Wait till you see her, and see them together."

"It's a problem!" said Leslie.

"Yes, I admit that!" conceded Douglas, "but it isn't pur problem."

"But they can't go on that way!" cried Leslie.

"I grant that," said Douglas. "All I stipulate is that lickey shall be left to plan their lives himself, and in a way tat makes him happy."

"That's only fair to him!" said Leslie.

ous!" asked Mr. Winton of Douglas.

"Fine!" he answered. "I've four turn out to be a big defalcation. So disgrace with probably a penitentiar.

"Oh Douglas! How can you?" cri

"How can a man live in luxury whe people's money to pay the bills?" he

"Yes I know, but Douglas, I wish place and plow corn, or fish for a living

"Sometimes I have an inkling that this I will wish so too," replied he.

"What do you think, Daddy?" aske "I think the 'way of the transgresse as always he pays in the end. Go ah know before you reach my office or a hope I have my department in perfectimes a man gets a surprise."

CHAPTER XIII

A SAFE PROPOSITION

"S' pose you do own a grouch, what's the use of displaying it in your show window?" Mickey.

HEN Mickey posted his letter, in deep thought he slowly walked home and that night his eyes closed with a feeling of relief. He was certain that when Peter and his wife and children talked over the plan he had suggested they would be anxious to have such a nice girl as Lily in their home for a week. He even went so far as the vague thought that if they kept her until fall, they never would be able to give her up, and possibly she could remain with them until he could learn whether her back could be cured, and make arrangements suitable for her. In his heart he felt sure that Mr. Bruce or Miss Leslie would help him take care of her, but he had strong objections to them. He thought the country with its clean air, birds, flowers and quiet the best place for her; if he allowed them to take her, she would be among luxuries which would make all he could do useless and unappreciated.

"She wasn't born to things like that; what's the use to spoil her with them?" he argued. "Course they haven't

went downtown early, spent a le protégé in the paper business, and when Douglas Bruce arrived an he hour, Mickey's call came, and he to meet Mr. and Mrs. Peter Hardin at four o'clock.

"Peter must have wanted to se plowing to come," commented Mathe receiver. "He couldn't have it night! They're just crazy to see Li they'll be worse yet; but of course to take her from me, 'cause they got to guess Peter is the safest proposition wouldn't ever put a little flowersy-gin Home. Sure he wouldn't! He wouldn't mine!"

"Mickey, what do you think?"

and catch big bass, and live on strawberries from the vines and cream straight from the cow——"

"I thought you'd get to the cow before long."

"And you are invited to go out with me as often as you want to, and you may arrange to have Lily out too! Won't that be fine?"

Mickey hesitated and his eyes grew speculative, before he answered with his ever ready, "Sure!"

"Miss Winton made a plan for her father and me," explained Douglas. "She knew that both of us would lose our vacations this summer, so she took an old cabin on Atwater, and moved out. We are to go back and forth each morning and evening. I never was at the lake before, but it's not far from the club house and it's beautiful. I think most of all I shall enjoy the swimming and fishing."

"I haven't had experience with water enough to swim in," said Mickey. "A tub has been my limit. You'll have a fine time all right, and thank you for asking me. I think Miss Winton is great. Ain't it funny how many fine folks there are in the world? 'Most every one I meet is too nice for any use; but I don't know any Swell Dames, my people are just common folks."

"You wouldn't call Miss Winton a 'Swell Dame,' then?"

"Well I should say nix!" cried Mickey. "You wouldn't catch her motoring away to a party and leaving her baby to be slapped and shook out of its breath by a mad nurse-lady, 'cause she left it herself where the sun hurt its eyes. She wouldn't put a little girl that couldn't walk in any

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phings' Home where no telling what might happen to r! She'd fix her a Precious Child and take her for a ride her car and be careful with her."

"Are you quite sure about that Mickey?"

"Surest thing you know," said Mickey emphatically. Why look her straight in the eyes, and you can tell. I we her coming away down the street, and the minute got my peepers on her I picked her for a winner, and I ess you did too."

"I certainly did," said Douglas. "But it is most imrtant that I be perfectly sure and I would like to have ur approval of my choice."

"I guess you're kidding now," ventured Mickey.

"No, I'm in earnest," said Douglas Bruce. "You see ickey, as I have said before, your education and mine ve been different, but yours is equally valuable."

"What shall I do now? 'Scuse me, I mean-what do I

it in your show window? Those things are dangerous. They're contagious. Seeing a fellow on the street looking like he'd never smile again, makes other folks think of their woes, and pretty soon everybody gets sorry for themselves. I'd like to see the whole world happy."

"Mickey, what makes you so happy to-day?"

"I scent somepin' nice in the air," said Mickey. "I hear the rumble of the joy wagon coming my way."

"You surely look it," declared Douglas. "It's a mighty fine thing to be happy. I am especially thinking that, because it looks like this last batch you brought me has a bad dose in it for a man I know. He won't be happy when he sees his name in letters an inch high on the front page of the *Herald*."

"No, he won't," agreed Mickey, his face dulling. "That comes in my line. I've seen men forced to take it right on the cars. Open a paper, slide down, turn white, shiver, then take a brace and try to sit up and look like they didn't care, when you could see it was all up with them. Gee, it's tough! I wish we were in other business."

"But what about the men who work hard for their money, not to mince matters, that these men you are pitying steal?" asked Douglas.

"Yes, I know," said Mickey. "But there's a big bunch of taxpayers, so it doesn't hit any one so hard. It's tough on them, but honest, Mr. Bruce, it ain't as tough to lose your coin as it is to lose your glad face. You can earn more money or slide along without so much; but once you get the slick, shamed look on your show window, you books, can we?"

"Nope," agreed Mickey. "Just the were plowing corn, 'stead of looking plowing job is awful nice. I watched day, the grandest big bunch of bone ar a team it took a gladiator to handle. saw it done at close range and it got me a man you'd want to tie to and stick 't If he ever has a case he is going to brir where he'll get a case out there ten mi with the bluest sky you ever saw over he fields under his feet, and clover and cow sheep and meadows on the other, I can't we were plowing for corn 'stead of tro "You little dunce," laughed Douglas fortune plowing corn."

"What's the difference how much y

with this I just got a hunch that you'll wish we had been plowing corn, too."

"What makes you so sure, Mickey?" said Douglas.

"Oh things I hear men say when I get the books keep me thinking," replied Mickey.

"What things?" queried Douglas.

"Oh about who's going to get the axe next!" said Mickey.

"But what of that?" asked Douglas.

"When you find these wrong entries you can't tell who made them."

"I know that the man who made them deserves what he gets," said Douglas.

"Yes, I guess he does," agreed Mickey. "Well go on! But when I grow up I'm going to plow corn."

"What about the poetry?" queried Douglas.

"They go together fine," explained Mickey. "When the book is finished, I believe I'd like clover on the cover better than the cow; but if Lily wants the live stock it goes!"

"Of course," assented Douglas. "But when she sees a real cow she may change her mind."

"Right in style! Ladies do it often," conceded Mickey.
"I've seen them so changeful they couldn't tell when they called a taxi where they wanted to be taken."

"Mickey, your observations on human nature would make a better book than your poetry."

"Oh I don't know," said Mickey. "You see I ain't really got at the poetry job yet. I have to be educated a

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to do it right. What I do now I wouldn't show to ybody else, it's just fooling for Lily. But I got an adess that gives me a look-in on the paper business if I er want it. I ain't got at the poetry yet, but I been on e human-nature job from the start. When you go cold d hungry if you don't know human nature—why you ow it, that's all!"

"You surely do," said Douglas. "Now let's hustle this renoon, and then you may have the remainder of the v. I am going fishing."

"Thank you," said Mickey, "I hope you get a bass long as your arm, and I hope the man you are chasg breaks his neck before you get him."

Mickey grinned at Douglas' laugh, and went racing about work happily, then he helped on his paper route until ar four, when he hurried to his meeting with Nancy and ter. "Yep. And mine is Peter too. So to avoid two Peters I am Junior. Come on in 'til the folks come."

Formalities were over. Mickey laughed appreciatively as he entered the car and straightway began an investigation of its machinery. Now any boy is proud to teach another something he wants to know and does not, so by the time the car was thoroughly explained any listener would have thought them acquaintances from birth.

"Hurry!" cried Junior when his parents came. "I want to get home with Mickey. I want him to show me—"

"Don't you hurry your folks, Junior," said Mickey, "I'll show you all right!"

"Well it's about time I was seeing something."

"Sure it is," agreed Mickey. "Come on with me here, and I'll show you what real boys are!"

"Say father, I'm coming you know," cried Junior. "I'm tired poking in the country. Just look what being in the city has made of Mickey."

"Yes, just look!" cried Mickey, waving both hands and bracing on feet wide apart. "Do look! Your age or more, and about half your beefsteak and bone."

"But you got muscle. I bet I couldn't throw you!"

"I bet you couldn't either," retorted Mickey, "'cause I survived Multiopolis by being Johnny not on the spot! I've dodged for my life and my living since I can remember. I'm champeen on that. But you come on with me, and I'll get you a job and let you try yourself."

"I'm coming," said Junior. Then remembering he was

t independent he turned to his mother. "Can't I take job and work here?"

Mrs. Harding braced herself and succumbed to habit. That will be as your father says."

Junior turned toward his father, doubt in his eye, and seived a shock. There was not a trace of surprise or sapproval on the face of Peter.

"Now maybe that would be the best way in the world you to help me out," he said. "You see me through inting and harvest and then I'll arrange to spare you, d you can see how you like it till fall. But of course u are too young yet to give up school. I don't agree to terrupting your education. I don't want the kind of a mbskull on my hands who thinks Christopher Colums signed the Declaration of Independence."

Mrs. Harding entered the car. "Now Mickey," she

street-car twice in her life, and for all I know hasn't talked to half a dozen people. She may take you for a bear, Peter; you will be quiet and easy, won't you?"

"Why Mickey," said Peter, "why of course son! Why I can hardly sense it, like you say, but by Jove, I do feel my knees going down. I guess I am going to kneel to her."

"Yes I guess you are," said Mickey dryly. "I saw one peep at her bring Mr. Douglas Bruce to his prayer bones, and maybe yours ain't any stiffer."

Mickey bounded up the stairs and swung wide his door. Again the awful heat hit him in the face. He swallowed a mouthful and hastily shut the door. "It's hard on Lily," was his mental comment, "but I guess I'll just save that for Mr. and Mrs. Peter. I think a few gulps of it will do them good; it will show them better than talking why, once she's out of it, she shouldn't come back 'til cold weather at least, if at all. Yes I guess!"

"Most baked honey?" he asked, taking her hot hands and bending over the child.

"Mickey, 'tain't near six," she panted.

"No it's two hours early," said Mickey. "But you know Flowersy-girl, I'm going to take care of you. Now it's getting too hot for you here. Don't you remember what I told you last night?"

"'Bout laying on the grass an' the clover flowers?"

"Exactly yes!" said Mickey. "'Fore we melt let's roll up in this sheet and go, Lily! What do you say?"

"Has—has the red-berry folks come?" she cried.

"They're downstairs, Lily. They're waiting."

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Peaches began climbing into his arms.

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"Mickey, Mickey-lovest, hold me tight," she panted

"Mickey, I'm scart just God-damned!"

"Wope! Wope lady! None of that!" cried Mickey aghast. "The place where you're going there's a nich little girl that never said such a word in all her life, and if she did her mammy would wash the badness out of he mouth with soap, just like I'll have to wash out yours, i you don't watch. You can't go in the big car, being held tight by me, else you promise cross your heart never, no never to say that again."

"Mickey, will soapin' take it out?" wailed Peaches.

"Well my mammy took it out of me that way!"

"Mickey get the soap, an' wash, an' scour it all ou now, so's I can't ever. Mickey, quick before the nice lad comes that has flower fields, an' red berries, an' hone 'lasses Mickey burry!" Mickey, make me a pretty girl, so's the nice lady will like me to drink her milk."

"Greedy!" said Mickey. "How can I make you pretty when the Lord didn't!"

"Ain't I pretty any at all?" queried Peaches.

"Mebby you would be if you'd fatten up a little," said Mickey judicially. "Can't anybody be pretty that's got bones sticking out all over them."

"Mickey, is the girl where we are going pretty?"

"I don't know," said Mickey. "I haven't seen her. She's a fine little girl, for she's at home taking care of her baby brother so's that her mammy can come and see if you are nice enough to go to her house and not spoil her children. See?"

Peaches nodded comprehendingly.

"Mickey, I won't again!" she insisted. "I said not never, never, never. Didn't you hear me?"

"Yes I heard you," said Mickey, applying the wash-doth, slipping on a fresh nightdress, brushing curls, and tying the ribbon with fingers shaking with excitement and haste. "Yes I heard you, but that stuff seems to come awful easy, Miss. You got to be careful no end. Now, I'm going to bring them. You just keep still and smile at them, and when they ask you, tell them the right antwer nice. Will you honey? Will you sure?"

"Surest thing you know," quoted Peaches promptly.

"Aw-w-w-ah!" groaned Mickey. "That ain't right! Miss Leslie wouldn't ever said that! You got that from ne, too! I guess I better soap out my own mouth 'fore

begin on you. 'Yes ma'am,' is the answer. Now you emember! I'll just bring in the lady first."

"I want to see Peter first!" announced Peaches.

"Well if I ever!" cried Mickey. "Peter is a great big nan, 'bout twice as big as Mr. Bruce. You don't either! 'ou want to see the nice lady first, 'cause it's up to her to ay if she'll take care of you. She may get mad and not et you go at all, if you ask to see Peter first. You want to see the nice lady first, don't you Lily?"

"Yes, if I got to, to see the cow. But I don't!" said ily. "I want to see Peter. I like Peter the best."

"Now you look here Miss Chicken, don't you start a antrum!" cried Mickey. "If you don't see this nice lady rst and be pretty to her, I'll just go down and tell them ou like lying here roasting, and they can go back to their ower-fields and berries. See?"

Peaches drew a deep breath but her eyes were wilful

at his heels he again approached it. There he made his second speech. He addressed it to Peter and Junior.

"'Cause she's so little and so scared, I guess the nice lady better go in first, and make up with her, and then one at a time you can come, so seeing so many strangers won't all upset her."

Peter assented heartily, but with a suffocating gesture removed his coat, and Junior followed his example. Mickey cut short something about "extreme heat" on the lips of Mrs. Harding by indicating the door, and opening it. He quickly closed it after her and advanced to Peaches.

"Lily, this is the nice lady I was telling you of who has got the bird singing and the flower-fields——" he began. Peaches drew back and shrank in size, her eyes wide with wonder and excitement, but her mind followed Mickey's lead, and she shocked his sense of propriety by adding: "and the good red berries."

But Mrs. Harding came from an environment where to have "good red berries," spicy smoked ham, fat chickens and golden loaves constituted a first test of efficiency. To have her red berries appreciated did not offend her. If Peaches had said "the sweetest, biggest red berries in Noble County," the woman would have been delighted, because that was her private opinion, but she was not so certain that corroboration was unpleasant. She advanced, tazing at the child unconsciously gasping the stifling air. The took one hurried glance at the room in its scrupulous pareness, with waves of heat from miles of city roof pouring in the open window, and bent over Peaches.

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"Won't you come out of this awful heat quickly, an let us carry you away to a cool, shady place? Dear litt girl, don't you want to come?" she questioned.

"Is Mickey coming too?" asked Peaches.

"Of course Mickey is coming too!" said the lady.

"Will he hold me?"

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"He will if you want him to," said Mrs. Harding, "be Peter is so much bigger, it wouldn't tire him a mite."

Mickey shifted on his feet and gazed at Peaches; as he eyes sought his, the message he telegraphed her was a plain that she caught it right.

"Mickey is just awful strong," she said. "I'll go he'll hold me. But I want to see Peter! I like Peter!

"Why you darling!" cried the nice lady.

"And I like Junior, that Mickey told me about, an your nice little girl that I mustn't ever, never, never so

"She likes you. She asked for you. You can both come at once," he announced, holding the door at a narrow crack until they reached it, both red faced, dripping, and fanning with their hats. Peter gasped for air.

"My God! Has any living child been cooped in this all day?" he roared. "Get her out! Get her out quick!

Get her out first and talk afterward. This will give her

this will give her scarlet fever!"

A shrill shout came from behind the intervening lady who arose and stepped back as Peaches raised to her bow, and stretched a shaking hand toward Peter.

"Gee, Peter! You get your mouth soaped out first!" the cried. "Gee, Peter! I like you, Peter!"

Peter bent over her and then stooping to her level he explored her with astonished eyes, as he cried: "Why hild, you ain't big enough for an exclamation point!"

Peaches didn't know what an exclamation point was, but Mickey did, and his laugh brought him again into ber thought.

"Mickey, let's beat it! Take me quick!" she panted.
"Take me first and talk afterward. Mickey, we just love here nice people, let's go drink their milk, and eat their here."

"Well Miss Chicken!" said Mickey turning a dull red. The Harding family were laughing.

"All right, everybody move," said Peter. "What do you want to take with you Mickey?"

"That basket there," he said. "And that box, you ake that Junior, and you take the Precious Child, and

ne slate and the books dearest lady—and I'll take my imily; but I ain't so sure about this lady. She's sweaty ow, and riding is the coolingest thing you can do. We justn't make her sick. She must be well wrapped p."

"Why she couldn't take cold to-day—" began Peter.

"You and Junior shoulder your loads and go right down the car," said Mrs. Harding. "Mickey and I will mange this. He is exactly right about it. To be taken om such heat to the conditions of motoring might—"

"Sure!" interposed Mickey, dreading the next word for ne memories it would awaken in the child's heart. "Sure! ou two go ahead! We'll come in no time!"

"But I'm not going to lug a basket and have a little hap like you carrying a child. You take this and I'll ke the baby!"

Mickey's wireless went into instant action and Peaches

says 'cause he makes me, jes like he ort, and nobody can't ever, not ever tend me like Mickey."

"So that's the ticket!" mused Peter.

"Yes, that's the ticket," repeated Peaches. "I ain't heavy. Mickey carried me up, down is easier."

"Sure!" said Mickey. "I take my own family. You take yours. We'll be there in a minute."

Peter and Junior disappeared with thankfulness and speed. Mrs. Harding and Mickey wrapped Peaches in the sheet and took along a comfort for shelter from the tir stirred by motion. Steadying his arm, which he wished she would not, they descended. Did she think he wanted Peaches to suppose he couldn't carry her? He an down the last flight to show her, frightening her into protest, and had the reward of a giggle against his neck and the tightening of small arms clinging to him. He settled in the car and without heeding Peter, wrapped Lily in the comfort until she had only a small peep of daylight and they started.

Mickey knew from Peaches' laboured breathing and the trip of her hands how agitated she was; but as the car thided smoothly along, driven skilfully by mentality, tuided by the controlling thought of a tiny lame back, she became easier and clutched less frantically. He kept the comfort over her head. She had enough to make the change, to see so many strangers all at once, without being excited by having her attention called to unfamiliar things that would bewilder and positively frighten her.

Mickey stoutly clung to a load that soon grew noticeably

eavy; while over and over he repeated in his heart with rtifying intent: "She is my family, I'll take care of her. Il let them keep her a while because it is too hot for her here, but they shan't boss her, and they got to know it est off, and they shan't take her from me, and they got understand it."

Right at that point Mickey's grip tightened until the aild in his arms shivered with delight of being so ended in her old and only security. She turned her head work her face level with the comfort and whisper in cortling glee: "Mickey, we are going just stylish like illyingaire folks, ain't we?"

"You just bet we are!" he whispered back.

"Mickey, you wouldn't let them 'get' me, would you!"

"Not on your life!" said Mickey, gripping her closer.

"And Peter wouldn't let them 'get' me?"

"No, Peter would just wipe them clear off the slate if they

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Let you see a cow. I guess you'd give a good deal to see the cow that's going on your book, wouldn't you?"

Peaches snuggled down in pure content and proved her semininity as she did every day. "Yes. But when I see them, maybe I'll like a chicken better, and put it on."

"All right with me," agreed Mickey. "You just hold still so this doesn't make you sick, and to-morrow you can see things when you are all nice and rested."

"Mickey," she whispered.

Mickey bent and what he heard buried his face against Peaches' a second and when lifted it radiated a shining gloryight, for she had whispered: "Mickey, I'm going to always mind you and love you best of anybody."

Because she had expected the trip to result in the bringing home of the child, Mrs. Harding had made ready a two folding davenport in her first-floor bedroom, beside a window where grass, birds and trees were almost in touch, and where it would be convenient to watch and care for the visitor. There in the light, pretty room, Mickey tently laid Peaches down and said: "Now if you'll just tive me time to get her rested and settled a little, you can the her a peep; but there ain't going to be much seeing or alking to-night. If she has such a lot she ain't used to and gets sick, it will be a bad thing for her, and all of us, to we better just go slow and easy."

"Right you are, young man," said Peter. "Come out of here you kids! Come to the back yard and play quietly. When Little White Butterfly gets rested and led, we'll come one at a time and kiss her hand, and

in the remainder of his promise, bec with the last bite and lay in deep exh smoothed the sheet, slipped off the 1 the curls, shaded the light, marshall and with anxious heart studied their

Then he telephoned Douglas Bruce be away from the office the following far from the house as he felt he da so anxious was he that he kept in : And so manly and tender was his scr and delicate his small charge as sh breathing to show she really lived, th Harding family grew a deep respect if was their trust in him, that when he fo stretched it on the floor beside the ch other did they think of uttering an ob

CHAPTER XIV

An Orphans' Home

She clung to her traditions and rearing; I contended there was a better.

**Leshie.

ARGARET, I want a few words with you some time soon," said James Minturn to his sister. "Why not right now?" she proposed. "I'm busy and for days I've known you were in trouble. I me at once, and possibly I can help you."

You would deserve my gratitude if you could," he I. "I've suffered until I'm reduced to the extremity t drives me to put into words the thing I have thrashed r in my heart day and night for weeks."

'Come to my room James," she said.

ames Minturn followed his sister and took the easy ir she offered him beside a window.

'Now go on and tell me, boy," she ordered. "Of course about Nellie."

'Yes it's about Nellie," he repeated. "Did you ir any part of what that very charming young lady I to say to me at our chosen playground, not long."

'Yes I did," answered Mrs. Winslow. "But not

tninks are true. Margaret, I though happy, in a way; actually happy! N seemed to me half so wonderful as the

"The difference in them is quite as you think it," agreed Mrs. Winslo

"It is greater than I would have any circumstances," said Mr. Mi accomplished as much in a year as t time I would have been gratified, a exhibit every evidence of childish lo ever mention their mother to you?"

"Incidentally," she replied, "just footman or governess, in referring to t never ask for her, in the sense of want of. Malcolm resembles her in appe could see that she liked him best. inated against James in his favour

boys are deeply interested, it's Malcolm who is being to slip away alone and listen to and practise bird until he deceives the birds themselves. Yesterday alled a catbird across an orchard and to within a few of him, by reproducing the notes as uttered and ined by the female."

I know. It was a triumph! He told me about it," Mrs. Winslow.

James is well named," said Mr. Minturn. "He is my Already he's beginning to ask questions that are I with intelligence, solicitude and interest about my ness, what things mean, what I am doing, and why. going to make the man who will come into my office, in a few more years will be offering his shoulder for of my load. You can't understand what the change om the old attitude of regarding me as worth no conration; not even a gentleman, as my wife's servants teaching my sons to think. Margaret, how am I g back even to the thought that I may be making istake? Wouldn't the unpardonable error be to risk e boys an hour again in the company and influence the brought them once to what they were?"

You poor soul!" exclaimed Mrs. Winslow.

Never mind that!" warned Mr. Minturn. "I'm not stomed to it, and it doesn't help. Have you any in Nellie?"

None whatever!" exclaimed Mrs. Winslow. "She's lifish it's simply fiendish. I'd as soon bury you as to you subject to her again."

endure it, as I realized what was had you, there was no indignity at which she stopped. For my amined Elizabeth before she was my tongue because I thought yo did you find out?"

"A newsboy told me. He went in the park where it happened to to insulted for their pains. Some wa las Bruce picked him up and attactiam; it was at my suggestion. imagine that out of several thou would select the one who knew m blasts me with his scorn. If he where I am, the whistle dies on h and he actually shrinks from my blame him. A man should be able to

"I have often wondered what or how much he told ruce," said Mr. Minturn.

"Could you detect any change in Mr. Bruce after the ry came into his office?" asked Mrs. Winslow.

"Only that he was kinder and friendlier than ever."

"That probably means that the boy told him and that r. Bruce understood and was sorry."

"No doubt," he said. "You'd talk to the boy then? ow what would you do about Nellie?"

"What was it Miss Winton thought you should do?"

"See Nellie! Take her back!" he exclaimed. "Give r further opportunity to exercise her brand of wifehood me and motherhood on the boys!"

"James, if you do, I'll never forgive you!" cried his ster. "If you tear up this comfortable, healthful place, here you are the honoured head of your house, and put sur boys back where you found them, I'll go home and ay there; and you can't blame me."

"Miss Winton didn't ask me to go back," he explained; that couldn't be done. I saw and examined the deed of ft of the premises to the city. The only thing she could would be to buy it back, and it's torn up inside, and will in shape for opening any day now, I hear. The city meded a Children's Hospital; to get a place like that free, so beautiful and convenient a location—and her old iends are furious at her for bringing sickness and crooked redies among them. No doubt they would welcome are there, but they wouldn't welcome her anywhere else iter that. She must have endowed it liberally, no hos-

On good Lord! ejaculated Mrs are you actually thinking of that? myself. I have a home and all I and those boys, are you really cont "No!" he said. "All I'm thinki

my duty to hunt her up and once r that she is heartless vanity personififerent to me personally, as I am to h

"Suppose you do go to her and find because you made the move for se wants to try it over, or to get the ha a mint of money. Do you know just

"I do not, and I never did," he mever in any part were in my hand making all I needed myself, and I has it is right I should have; but she life and what satisfies me; and she'd

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ien what——?" marvelled Mrs. Winslow. imarily, her mother, then her society friends, then wer of her money," he answered. st how did it happen?" she queried.

began with Mrs. Blondon's violent opposition to en; when she knew a child was coming she practically I in with us, and spent hours pitying her daughter, g for a doctor at each inevitable consequence, keepp an exciting rush of friends coming when the rould have had quiet and rest, treating me with npt. and daily holding me up as the monster responor all these things. The result was nervousness and tent bred by such a course at such a time, until it nted to actual pain, and lastly unlimited money which to indulge every fancy. From the régime Blondon installed in our home, you would have it that bringing a child into the world was a rare, rd-of occurrence, happening for the first time in the of the world, on the least natural development of it was necessary to call in six specialists, and rally world to support her daughter.

such circumstances delivery became the horror they of it, although several of the doctors told me prinot to have the slightest alarm; it was simply the d of rich selfish women to make such a bugbear of irth a wife might well be excused for refusing to it. Sifted to the bottom that was exactly what I didn't know until the birth of James that had neglected to follow the instructions of their

healthy, and while skilled nurses we every rule by thriving; which was o me, and the lesson pointed out and young wife could give a child such: was better off in the hands of the reared without love, that his mother responsibility in his care, developed hood, simply went on being a socie to do with it.

"He did so well, Nellie escaped many of her friends, that in time sh and didn't rebel at Malcolm's adven by that time I had been practically nursery; governesses were empowere me; I scarcely saw my children, and me furious, so I vetoed more orphan and gave up doing anything. Then rced to say it, although it furnishes one more exof what is called inconsistency."

careful what you say, Margaret!"

nust say it," she replied. "I've encouraged you to detail, because I wanted to be sure I was right in the n I was taking; and you've given me a different sint. Why James, think it over yourself in the light t you just have told me. Nellie never has been a r at all! Her heart is more barren than that of a 1 to whom motherhood is physical impossibility, yet heart aches with maternal instinct!"

argaret!" cried James Minturn.

nes, it's true!" she persisted. "I never have tood. For fear of that, I led you on and now look you've told me. Nellie never had a chance at I motherhood. The thing called society made a mother to begin with, and she in turn ruined ughter, and if Elizabeth had lived it would have assed on to her. You throw a new light on Nellie. 3 as she was herself, she was tender and loving, and lored her; if you had been alone and moderately stanced, she would have continued being so lovable ter ten years your face flushes with painful memory speak of it. I've always thought her abandoned as thy and motherly instinct. What you say proves is a lovable girl, ruined by society, through the n of her mother and friends."

she cared for me as she said, she should have been of a woman—" began Mr. Minturn.

positively and permanently chan pense I will do Nellie justice. J not against your wife; it is again her, the society that moulded her to you and to me, the fact rema just told me is proof positive th mate and started right and then as emulated by her mother. Whe will admit that this is the truth!"

"She should have been woman "Left alone, she was!" insisted the ills and apprehensions of mot yielded as most young, inexperien to what came under the guise of no doubt eased or banished pain, when possible; and the pain connict a thing in area of which the

If if she is heartless; or whether in some miraculous way me one has proved to her what you have made plain as assible to me. You must hunt her up, and if she is still ader her mother's and society's influence, and refuses change, let her remain. But—but if she has changed, you have just seen me change, then you should give er another chance if she asks it."

"I can't!" he cried.

"You must!" she persisted. "The evidence is in her your."

"What do you mean?" he demanded impatiently.

"Her acquiescence in your right to take the boys and ter their method of life; her agreement that for their kes you might do as you chose with no interference om her; both those are the acknowledgment of failure her part and willingness for you to repair the damages you can," she explained. "Her gift of a residence, the rnishings of which would have paid for the slight alterions necessary to transform a modern home into the ost beautiful of modern hospitals, in a wonderfully vely location, and leave enough to start it with as fine a aff as money can provide—that gift is a deliberately anned effort at reparation; the limiting of patients to sildren under ten is her heart trying to tell yours that he would atone."

"O Lord!" cried James Minturn.

"Yes I know," said Mrs. Winslow. "Call on Him! ou need Him! There is no question but that He put to her head the idea of setting a home for the healing of

and see it. And I recall now that I with sheets of paper in his hand, ta I think he's working for Nellie and directing the changes and personally shining reparation."

"It's a late date to talk about repa
"Which simply drives me to the
than never!' and to the addition of
Nellie is only thirty and that but to
have been wasted; if you hurry and
you should have fifty apiece coming to
deep, sleep cool, and dine sensibly," so
She walked out of the room and clo
Minturn sat thinking a long time,

and drove to Atwater alone. He is orchard, a book of bird scores in her sheets of music beside her. Her gree so frankly sweet and womanly he can

"Yes. It's the most fascinating thing," she said.

"I know," he conceded. "I want the titles of the books ou're using. I mentioned it to Mr. Tower, our tutor, and e was interested instantly, and far more capable of going t it intelligently than I am, because he has some musical raining. Ever since we talked it over he and the boys ave been at work in a crude way; you might be amused at heir results, but to me they are wonderful. They began uding in bird haunts and listening, working on imitations f cries and calls, and reproducing what they heard, until n a few weeks' time-why I don't even know their reperoire, but they can call quail, larks, owls, orioles, whippoor-wills, so perfectly they get answers. James will never lo anything worth while in music, he's too much like me: ut Malcolm is saving his money and working to buy a iolin, and he's going to read a music score faster than he rill a book. I'm hunting an instructor for him who will tart his education on the subjects which interest him nost. Do you know any one Leslie?"

"No one who could do more than study with him. It's branch that is just being taken up, but I have talked of t quite a bit with Mr. Dovesky, the harmony director of he Conservatory. If you go to him and make him undertand what you want along every line, I think he'd ake Malcolm as a special student. I'd love to help him as far as I've gone, but I'm only a beginner myself, and I've no such ability as it is very possible he may have."

"He has it," said Mr. Minturn conclusively. "He has

promised you to think matters over, else since I last saw you, hateful as tion. You're still sure of what you s

"Positively!" cried Leslie.

- "Do you hear from her?" he ask "No," she answered.
- "You spoke of a letter-" he si
- "A note she wrote me before Leslie. "You see I'd been with her raced home so joyously; and when the did, she knew I wouldn't understand

"Might I see it?" he asked.

"Surely," said Leslie. "I spoke o I'll bring it."

When Leslie returned James Minti several times, and then he handed it b

rou didn't know what you were doing to her, in your reeption of her; and the final admission that life now held
to little for her that she would gladly end it, if she dared,
without making what reparation she could. What more
lo you want?"

"You're very sure you are drawing the right deducions?" he asked.

"I wish you would sit down and let me tell you of that lay," said Leslie.

"I have come to you for help," said James Minturn. 'I would be more than glad, if you'd be so kind."

At the end: "I don't think I've missed a word," said Leslie. "That day is and always will be sharply outlined."

"You've not heard from her since that note?" he asked.
'You don't know where she is?"

"No," said Leslie. "I haven't an idea where you could ind her; but because of her lawyer superintending the sospital repairs, because of the staff announced, because of the wonderful way things are being done, Daddy thinks t's sure that the work is in John Haynes' hands, and that the is directing it through him."

"If it were not for the war, I would know," said Mr. Minturn. "But understanding her as I do——"

"I think instead of understanding her so well, you carcely know her at all," said Leslie gently. "You nay have had a few months of her real nature to begin with, but when her rearing and environment ruled her life, the real woman was either perverted or had small chance. Do you ever stop to think what kind of a man you might

saying it was your fault; I'm not say merely stating facts."

"Margaret blames me!" said Mr. N I'm enough at fault that I never can locate Nellie and learn whether she is friends, or if she really meant what she enough to go ahead and be different for

"Her change was radical and pern "I've got to know," said Mr. Mintu in her ability to change, and no desire t

"Humph!" said Leslie. "That p some changing yourself."

"I certainly do," said James M. have an operation on my brain which particular cell in which is stored the ten years—"

"You will when you see her," sai be your surgeon." shifting so imperceptibly he did not realize what was ning. On his way he decided to visit the hospital, ant as the thought was to him. From afar he was d at sight of the building. He knew instantly that t have been the leading topic of conversation among ends purposely avoided in his presence. Marble pilid decorations had been freshly cleaned, the building owdrift white; it shone through the branches of big urrounding it like a fairy palace. At the top of the leading to the entrance stood a marble group of proportions that was wonderful. It was a seated of Christ, but cut with the face of a man of his staeccupation, and race, garbed in simple robe, and in ms, at his knees, leaning against him, a group of en: the lean, sick and ailing, such as were carried to or healing. Cut in the wall above it in large goldletters was the admonition: "Suffer little children ie unto me."

t group was the work of a student and a thinker puld carry an idea to a logical conclusion, and then it from marble. The thought it gave James Minarrested before it, was not the stereotyped idea of, not the conventional reproduction of childhood. Pressed on Mr. Minturn's brain that the man of a had lived in the form of other men of his day, and such a face, filled with infinite compassion, was stronger and more forceful than that of the mild ne countenance he had been accustomed to associwith the Saviour.

thowers in tubs, canaries singing in a end of the room, tiny chairs, cots, e of comfort and amusement for conv. The pipe organ remained in place, must ful mechanical toys had been added in the house were spread on the flucould study and interpret the intense moved. All over the building was whiteness, the same comfort, and the forthe purpose it was designed to rooms were perfect, the whole the recareful execution, and uncounted explanations.

He came in time to the locked do and before he left the building he offered his hand and said heartily: ' the wonderful work going on here come and see for myself, and I am ve l hers," said Mr. Haynes. "I only carry out her ctions as they come to me."

ill you give me her address?" asked Mr. Minturn. uld like to tell her how great I think this."

carry a packet for you that came with a bundle of this morning," said Mr. Haynes. "Perhaps her is is in it. If it isn't, I can't give it to you, because n't it myself. She's not in the city, all her instrucshe sends some one, possibly at her mother's home, and are delivered to me. I give my communications boy who brings her orders."

en I'll write my note and you give it to him."

n sorry Minturn," said Mr. Haynes, "but I have ders in the event you should wish to reach her h me."

e doesn't wish to hear from me?"

n sorry no end, Mr. Minturn, but-"

ssibly this contains what I want to know," said Mr. rn. "Thank you, and I congratulate you on your tere. It is humane in the finest degree."

es Minturn went to his office and opened the packet. a complete schedule of accounting for every dollar ie was worth, this divided exactly into thirds, one ch she kept, one she transferred to him, and the she placed in his care for her sons to be equally dibetween them at his discretion. He returned and the lawyer had gone to his office. He followed and I him the documents.

nat she places to my credit for our sons, that I will

"Sorry Minturn, but as I told you her address. I'm working on a sala forfeit, and my orders are distinct co "You could give me no idea where "Not the slightest!" said the lawy "Will you take charge of these pape"I dare not," replied Mr. Haynes "Will you ask her if you may?" po "Sorry Minturn, but perhaps if instructions in the case, you'd use

don't wish you to think me disoblist Mr. Minturn took the sheet and reagraph written in his wife's clear has

"Leslie Winton was very good to me m She was with me when I reached a decision tions with Mr. Minturn, as I would have quite sure when she knows of our separation out of your power, unless I make some misstep that points to I am. I don't wish to make any mystery of my location, or toard any intention that it is barely possible Leslie could bring Mr. rn to, concerning me. I merely wish to be left alone for a time; k out my own expiation, if there be any; and to test my soul until for myself whether it is possible for a social leopard to change ots. I have got to know absolutely that I am beyond question an fit to be a wife and mother, before I again trust myself in any n of life toward any one."

Minturn returned the sheet, his face deeply ghtful. "I see her point," he said. "I will deposit papers in a safety vault until she comes, and in dance with this, I shall make no effort to find her. wife feels that she must work out her own salvation, am beginning to realize that a thorough self-investin and revelation will not hurt me. Thank you. morning."

Mickey was watching besid member, to prompt, to so to teach. He followed Mrs. Hardir from the prepared food selected wl closest filling the diet prescribed by and then he carried the tray to a fresl a window opening on a grassy, tree room was bewildering on account of child magnificent, furnishings. She ing and twisting and filled with a wi see the house, the little girl and the beyond her window, the flower-field, they grew, and the birds and anima

excused them and they ventured as far as the door. There they stopped and gazed at the little stranger and she stared back at them; but she was not frightened, because she knew who they were and that they would be good to her, else Mickey would not let them come. So when Mary, holding little brother's hand, came peeping around the door-casing, Peaches withdrew her attention from exploration of the strip of lawn in her range and concentrated on them. If they had come bounding at her, she would have been frightened, but they did not. They stood still, half afraid, watching the tiny white creature, till suddenly she smiled at them and held out her hand.

"I like you," she said. "Did you have red berries for breakfus?"

Mary nodded and smiled back.

"I think you're a pretty little girl," said Peaches.

"I ain't half as pretty as you," said Mary.

"No a-course you ain't," she admitted. "Your family don't put your ribbon on you 'til night, do they? Mickey put mine on this morning 'cause I have to look nice and be jus' as good, else I have to be took back to the hot room. Do you have to be nice too?"

"Yes, I have to be a good girl," said Mary.

"What does your family do to you if you don't mind?"

"I ain't going to tell, but it makes me," said Mary. "What does yours do to you?"

"I ain't going to tell either," said Peaches, "but I get jus' as good! What's your name?"

"Marv."

mark improvements, but he could see protrude so far, that her skin was no horror it had been, that the calloused: the steady rubbing of nightly oil mass added the same treatment to her fe less bony, if the skin were not soft an colour, Mickey felt that his eyes we

Surely she was better! Of course had to be! She ate more, she sat up feet where first they had hung helple much better, and for that especial reast to watch closer than before. Now that a big strong child did not drag h forever undo all he had gained. So Dr. Carrel, Mickey had rubbed in a nights but mornings also, lest he had

could obey orders, instantly, cheerfully, and unquestioningly.

Mickey watched. Any one could have seen the delicate flush on Peaches' cheek that morning, the hint of red on her lips, the clearing whites of her lovely eyes. She was helping Bobbie as Mickey had taught her. And Bobbie approved mightily. He lifted his face, put up his arms and issued his command: "Take Bobbie!"

"No! No, Bobbie," cautioned Mary. "Mother said no! You must stay on the floor! Sister will take you. You mustn't touch Peaches 'til God makes her well. You asked Him last night, don't you know? Mother will spank something awful if you touch her. You must be careful 'til her back is well, mother said so, and father too; father said it crosser than mother, don't you remember?"

"Mustn't touch!" repeated Bobbie, drawing back.

Mickey was satisfied with what he had heard of Mrs. Harding's instructions, but he took the opportunity to emphasize a few points himself. He even slipped one white, bony foot from under the sheet and showed Mary how sick it was, and how carefully it must be rubbed before it would walk.

"I can rub it," announced Mary.

"Well don't you try that," cautioned Mickey.

"Why go on and let her!" interposed Peaches. "Go on and let her! After to-day you said you'd be gone all day, an' if rubbing in the morning and evening is good, maybe more would make me walk sooner. Mickey, I ain't ever said it, 'cause you do so much an' try so hard, but Mickey,

show you how, and maybe you car go slow and easy and don't jar her "Ma said I could a-ready," explair

me to! She said all of us would, all th were away, so she'd get better faster hundred dollars if Peaches would get

Mickey sat back on his heels sud "Who'd she say that to?" he der

"Pa. And he said he'd give five "Aw-a-ah!" marvelled Mickey.

"He did too!" insisted Mary. "
came out. And Junior would too
bank! And he'd rub too! He said
"Well, if you ain't the nicest

"Gee, I'm glad I found you!"

"Jus' as glad!" chimed in Peach

A PARTICULAR NIX

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"The country is all the Heaven a-body needs, in June," aid Mickey.

"Mickey, bring in the cow now!" ordered Peaches.

"Bring in the cow?" queried Mickey.

"Sure, the little red cow in the book that makes the ilk," said Peaches. "I want you to milk her right here a my bed!"

"Well, if I ever!" gasped Mickey. "Sure, I'll bring her a minute; but a cow is big, Lily! Awful, great big. I suldn't bring her in here; but maybe I can drive her here you can see, or I don't know what would be the arm in taking you where the cows are. But first, one sing! Now you look right at me, Miss Chicken. There's mething I got to know if you got in your head straight. The found you, and kept them from 'getting' you?"

"Mickey-lovest," replied Peaches promptly.

"Then who d'you belong to?" he demanded.

"Mickey!" she answered instantly.

"Who you got to do as I say?" he continued.

"Mickey," she repeated.

"Whose family are you?" he pursued.

"Mickey's!" she cried. "Mickey, what's the matter? lickey, I love you best. I'm all yours. Mickey, I'll go ack an' never say a word 'bout the hotness, or the longess, or anything, if you don't want me here."

"Well I do want you here," said Mickey in slow insistent one. "I want you right here! But you got to underand a few things. You're mine. I'm going to keep ou; you got to understand that."

of his own, so he knows how it anybody else, Miss Chicken, see?'

"They ain't nobody else!" said l "There is too!" contradicted Junior would rub your feet! W on Junior! He's only a boy! He hasn's had experience. He doesn junilies! See?"

"He carries Bobbie, an' I bet he For the first time Mickey lost his "Now you looky here. Miss "I aim't saying what he can do. I's See? You are mine, and I'm goin lift me for all I care, but he can't feet, nor nothing; because he didn't his; and I won't have it, not at a

.

"Umhuh," taunted Peaches.

"Well, are you going to promise?" demanded Mickey.

"Maybe," she teased.

"Back you go and never see a cow at all if you don't promise," threatened Mickey.

"Mickey, what's the matter with you?" cried Peaches uddenly. "What you gettin' a tantrum yourself for? You ain't never had none before."

"That ain't no sign I ain't just busting full of them," said Mickey. "Bad ones, and I feel an awful one as can be comng right now, and coming quick. Are you going to promise me nobody who hasn't a family, carries you, and rubs you?"

Peaches looked at him in steady wonderment.

"I guess you're pretty tired, an' you need to sleep while, or somepin," she said. "If you wasn't about sick rourself, you'd know 'at anybody 'cept you 'ull get their lam-gone heads ripped off if they touches me, nelse you say so. Course, you found me! Course, they'd a-got me, you hadn't took me. Course, I'm yours! Course, it's ix on Junior, an' it's nix on Peter if you say so. Mickey, jus' love you an' love you. I'll go back now if you say p, I tell you. Mickey, what's the matter?"

She stretched up her arms, and Mickey sank into them. Le buried his face beside hers and for the first time she atted him, and whispered to him as she did to her doll. Le rubbed her cheek against his, crooned over him, and ald him tight while he gulped down big sobs.

"Mickey, tell me," she begged, like a little mother. Tell me honey? Are you got a pain anywhere?"

worse yet. I didn't mean to, bu can't trust me. I guess you got to somepin awful. Go on an' do it, "Why crazy!" said Mickey. "didn't say anything! What you s rightest of anything I ever heard. I wanted you to say. I just loved wi "Well if I ever!" cried Peaches. mixed up you didn't hear me. Goody, goody! Now show me th

"All right!" said Mickey. "I' ing and see how she thinks I best gever, ever forget that particular ni

"Not ever," she promised, and the pact with a kiss that meant n that had preceded it. Then just you keep right before your eyes where you me from, Miss, and what you must go back to, if you must behave. You will be a good girl, won't you?"

"Honest, Mickey-lovest, jus' as good."

"Well how goes it with the Little White Butterfly?" sked Peter at the door.

Mickey looked at Peaches and slightly nodded encourgement, then he slipped from the room. She gave Peter smile of wonderment and answered readily: "Grand as meen-lady. You're jus' so nice and fine."

Now Peter hadn't known it, but all his life he had been ig, and handled rough tools, tasks, implements and anials; while his body grew sinewy and hard, to cope with is task, his heart demanded more refined things; so if eaches had known the most musical languages on earth, he could not have used words to Peter that would have aved her better. He radiated content.

"Good!" he cried. "That's grand and good! I didn't the a fair look at you last night. It was so sissing hot in hat place and you went to sleep before I got my chores one; but now we must get acquainted. Tell me honey, there does, put your hand and show Peter where."

Peaches stared at Peter in assimilating such gentleness om so big a source, then she faintly smiled at him and id a fluttering hand on her left side.

"Oh shockings!" mourned Peter. "That's too bad! nat's vital! Your heart's right under there, honey. Is ere a pain in your heart?"

anything in my life. Ma and I h having some city children here is been slow trying it because we have many of them, and it's natural for own; but I guess instead of shields denying. I can't see anything abouts; and I notice a number of wa to have you here. It's surely goo the nicest little folks!"

Peaches sat up suddenly and smi "Mickey is nice an' fine," she you, or anybody, is nice as Mickey I'd like to be! But you see, I laid corner so long, an' I got so wild lik come, I done an' said jus' like she d like it. He's scart most stiff fear I swearin's, an' you'll send me back speak to Ma about it, and we'll just turn a deaf ear, d away out here, you'll soon forget it."

Just then, Mickey, trailing a rope, passed before the indow; there was a crunching sound; a lumbering cow opped, lifted a mouth half filled with grass, and bawled her udest protest at being separated from her calf. Peaches id only half a glance, but her shriek was utter terror. he launched herself on Peter and climbed him, until ir knees were on his chest, and her fingers clutching his iir.

"God Jesus!" she screamed. "It 'ull eat me!"

Peter caught her in his arms and turned his back. ickey heard, and saw, and realized that the cow was o big and had appeared too precipitately, and bellowed o loudly. He should have begun on the smallest calf the place. He rushed the cow back to Junior, and mself to Peaches, who, sobbing wildly, still clung to ster. As Mickey entered, frightened and despairing, he w that Peter was much concerned, but laughing until his oulders shook, and in relief that he was, and that none of the children were present, Mickey grinned, acquired a pw red, and tried to quiet Peaches.

"Shut that window!" she screamed. "Shut it quick!"
"Why honey, that's the cow you wanted to see,"
othed Mickey. "That's the nice cow that gave the
ry milk you had for breakfast, and Junior was going to
ilk her where you could see. We thought you'd like it!"
"Don't let it get me!" cried Peaches.

"Why it ain't going to get anything but grass!" said

big, Lily. I ran from the horses. and Junior laughed at me."

"Mickey, what did you say?" v
"I didn't say anything," said Mi
"Mickey, I jumped, an' I said i
on Peter," she bravely confessed.
worst yet! I didn't know I did
Mickey, I got another chance!"

Peaches wiped her eyes, tremi window, and still clinging to Micli just telling Peter about the swear feel so bad. He won't send m Mickey, Peter has got 'a deaf ear.' ain't goin' to hear it when I slip a I am tryin'! Honest I'm tryin' ju Mickey turned a despairing face Vell." said Peter. "don't make too much of it! there are no words she can say that my children know. Just ignore and forget it! She won't do it I'm sure she won't!"

tre you sure you won't, Miss?" demanded Mickey. ure!" said Peaches, and in an effort to change the :ct: "Mickey, is that cow out there yet?"

Io, Junior took her back to the barnvard."

lickey, I ain't going to put a cow on my book; but I to see her again, away off. Mickey, take me where see. You said last night you would."

lut the horses are bigger than the cows. The pigs and are big enough, you'll get scared again, and with scarnd crying you'll be so bad off your back won't get any r all day, and to-morrow I got to leave you and go to

hen I'll see all the things to-day, an' to-morrow I'll : about them 'til you come back. Please Mickey! ngs don't get Bobbie an' Mary, they won't get me!" "All right, 'hat's a game little girl!" said Mickey. ike you. But you ought to have-" lave what Mickey?" she inquired, instantly alert.

Vell never you mind what," said Mickey. "You be a girl and lie still, so your back will be better, and watch undle I'll bring home to-morrow night."

aches shivered in delight. Mickey proceeded slowly, red by the entire family.

sickey, it's so big!" she marvelled. "Everything is : away, an' so big!"

"Now isn't it!" agreed Mickey. "You see it's like! told you. Now let me show you the garden."

He selected that as a safe proposition. Peaches grasped the idea readily enough. Mrs. Harding gathered vegetables for her to see. When they reached the strawberry bed Mickey knelt and with her own fingers Peaches pulled a berry and ate it, then laughed, exclaimed, and cried in delight. She picked a flower, and from the safe vantage of the garden viewed the cows and horses afar; and the fields and sheep were explained to her. Mickey carried her across the road, Mary brought a comfort, and for a whole hour the child lay under a big tree with pink and white clover in a foot-deep border around her. When they lifted her she said: "Mickey, to-night we put in the biggest blesses of all."

"What?" inquired Mickey.

"Bless the nice people for such grand things, an' the

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A PARTICULAR NIX

rooping, and pried open her excited little fingers; but the nicken remained limp, and soon it became evident that the had squeezed the life from it.

"Oh Peaches, you held it too tight!" wailed Mickey. I'm afraid you've made it sick!"

"I didn't mean to Mickey!" she protested. "I didn't rop it! I held it tight as I could!"

Mrs. Harding reached over and picked the chicken from lickey's fingers.

"That chicken wasn't very well to begin with," she aid. "You give it to me, and I'll doctor it up, while ou take another one. Which do you want?"

"Yellow," sniffed Peaches, "but please hurry, and fickey, you hold this one. Maybe I held too hard!"

"Yes you did," laughed Peter. "But we wanted to what you'd do. One little chicken is a small price for be show you give. It's all right, Butterfly."

"Peter, you make everything all right, don't you?"

"Well honey, I would if I could," said Peter. "But at's something of a contract. Now you rest till after timer, and if Ma and Mickey agree on it, we'll go see to meadow brook and hear the birds sing."

"The water!" shouted Peaches. "Mickey, you prom-

"Yes I remember," said Mickey. "I'll see how cold is and if I think it won't chill you—yes."

"Oh gee!" chortled Peaches. "'Nother blesses!"

What does she mean?" asked Peter.

key explained.

or rather they are entertaining m the best day of my life. Isn't it "It just is! I can't half we Nancy Harding. "I just wonder run in the car after supper?"

"What do you think about it, "Why, I can't see that coming "Then we'll go," said Peter.

"Do I have to be all covered?'

"Not nearly so much," expla you see a lot more. There's a l street Peter wants to show you."

"Street!" jeered Junior. "I

"Sure!" said Mickey. "I got a me, will you Junior?"

"Course!" said Junior, sudden

"Mickey always carries me. He can! And of course like him the best; but after him, I like you best Peter, ad you may, if he'll let you."

"So that's the way the wind blows!" laughed Peter. Then Mickey, it's up to you."

"Why sure!" said Mickey. "Since you are so big, and ot a family of your own, so you understand—"

"What Mickey?" asked Peter.

"Oh how to be easy with little sick people," answered lickey, "and that a man's family is his family, and he on't want anybody else butting in!"

"I see!" said Peter, struggling with his facial muscles. Of course! But this sheet is going to be rather bungleome. Ma, could you do anything about it?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Harding. "Mary, you run up to the annel chest, and get Bobbie's little blue blanket."

Peter lifted the child to his broad breast, she slipped her rms around his neck, and laid her head on his shoulder, ith a sigh of content.

Bloom time was past, but bird time was not, and the aves were still freshly green and tender. Some of them ached to touch Peaches' gold hair in passing. She was all high to see into nests and the bluebirds' hollow in the ople tree. Peaches gripped Peter and cried: "Don't tit get my feet!" when the old turkey gobbler came usping, strutting, and spitting at the party. Mickey pinted to Mary, who was unafraid, and Peaches' clutch grew as frantic but she defended: "Well, I don't care! I bet if the hadn't ever seen one before, an' then a big thing like

hat would come right at her, tellin' plain it was goin' to est er alive, it would scare the livers out of her."

"Yes I guess it would," conceded Peter. "But you ot the eating end of it wrong. It isn't going to eat us. e are going to eat it. About Thanksgiving, we'll lay its ead on the block and Ma will stuff it-"

"I've quit stuffing turkeys, Peter," said Mrs. Harding. I find it spoils the flavour of the meat."

"Well then it will stuff us," said Peter, "all we can hold, nd mince pie, plum pudding, and every good thing we an think of. What piece of turkey do you like best, utterfly?"

Mickey instantly scanned Peter, then Mrs. Peter, and ensely waited.

"Oh stop! Stop! Is that a turkey bird?" cried Peaches. "Surely it is," said Mrs. Harding. "Why childie, aven't you ever seen a turkey, either?"

"Well that's a way it has of puffing itself up and making a great big pretense that it is going to flop us, and then if just little Bobbie or Ma waves an apron or a stick it gets out of the way in a hurry."

"I've seen Multiopolis millyingaires cave in like that sometimes when I waved a morning paper with an inchhigh headline about them," commented Mickey.

Peter Harding glanced at his wife, and they laughed together. Peter stepped over a snake fence, went carefully down a hill, crossed the meadow to the shade of a tree, sat on the bank of the brook and watched Peaches as she studied first the clear babbling water, then the grass trailing in the stream, the bushes, trees, and then the water again.

"Mickey, come here!" she commanded. "Put your head right down beside mine. Now look just the way I do, an' tell me what you see."

"I see running water, and grassy banks, and trees, and the birds, and the sky and the clouds—the water shows what's above it like a mirror, Lily."

Peaches pointed. Mickey watched intently.

"Sure!" he cried. "Little fish with red speckles on them. Shall I catch you one to see?"

"Tain't my eyes then?" questioned Peaches.

"Your eyes, Miss?" asked Mickey bewildered.

"Tain't my eyes seein' things that yours doesn't?"

Mickey took her hand and drew closer.

"Well it isn't any wonder you almost doubt it, honey," be said. "I would too, if I hadn't ever seen it before. But I been on the trolley, and on a few newsboys' excur-

ions, and in the car with Mr. Bruce, and I've got to walk long the str—roads some, so I know it's real. Let me how you——!"

Mickey slipped down the bank, scooped his hands full of water, and lifted them, letting it drip through his fingers. Then he made a sweep and brought up one of the fish, orightly marked as a flower, and gasping in the air.

"Look quick!" he cried. "See it good! It's used to vater and the air chokes it, just like the water would you f a big fish would take you and hold your head under; got to put it back quick."

"Mickey, lay it in my hand, just a little bit!"

Mickey obeyed and Peaches examined it hurriedly.

"Put it back!" she cried. "I guess that's as long as I'd want to be choked, while a fish looked at me."

Mickey exchanged the fish for a handful of wet, vividly

"Well, I don't say so!" exclaimed Mrs. Harding. "The nildren have their good clothes on and they always get to omping and dirty themselves and then it's bigger washigs and mine are enough to break my back right now." Peter looked at his wife intently. "Why Nancy, I hadn't eard you complain before!" he said. "If they're too ig, we must wear less and make them smaller, and I'll ake an hour at the machine, and Junior can turn the minger. All of you children listen to me. Your Ma is teling the size of the wash. That means we must be wore careful of our clothes and help her better. If Ma tets sick, or tired of us, we'll be in a fix, I tell you!"

"I didn't say I was sick, or tired of you, I'm just tired fwashing!" said Mrs. Harding.

"I see!" said Peter. "But it is a thing that has got to done, like plowing and sowing."

"Yes I know," said Mrs. Harding, "but plowing and wing only come once a year. Washing comes once and rice a week."

"Let me," said Mickey. "I always helped mother, and do my own and Lily's at home. Of course I will here, ad I can help you a lot with yours!"

"Yes a boy!" scoffed Mrs. Harding.

"Well I'll show you that a boy can work as well as a girl, he's been taught right," said Mickey.

"I wasn't bringing up any question of work," said Mrs. arding. "I just didn't want the children to dirty a und of clothing apiece. They may wade when their ings are ready for the wash anyway. Go on Peaches!"

Peter moved down the bank and prepared to lower her o the water, but she reached her arms for Mickey.

"He promised me," she said. "Back there on his nice

ed in the hot room he promised me this."

"So I did," said Mickey, radiating satisfaction he could ot conceal. "So I did! Now, I'll let you put your feet n, like I said."

"Will the fish bite me?" she questioned timidly.

"Those little things! What if they did?"

Thus encouraged she put her toes in the water, gripping Mickey and waiting breathlessly to see what happened Jothing happened and the warm, running water felt pleasnt, so she dipped lower, and then did her best to make a splash. It wasn't much of a splash, but it was a satistying performance to the parties most interested, and from heir eagerness the watchers understood what it meant to hem. Junior sidled up to his mother.

"It would leave me that much more time and strength give to her," she said.

"Will all I can save you in any way be helping her that such?" he persisted.

"Surely!" she said. "Soon as he's out of sight, I'm ping to begin on her. But don't let them hear!"

Junior nodded. He sat down on the bank watching as fascinated the feet trying to splash in the water. Mickey ould feel the effort of the small body.

"You take her now," he said to Peter. Then he threw ff his shoes and stockings, turned up his knee breeches and stepped into the water, where he helped the feet to ick and splash. He rubbed them and at last picked up andfuls of fine sand and lightly massaged with it until he tought a pink glow.

"That's the stuff," indorsed Peter. "Look at that! ou're pulling the blood down."

"Where's the blood?" asked Peaches.

Peter explained the circulatory system and why all the ears of lying, with no movement, had made her so helpss. He told her why scarce and wrong food had not ade good blood to push down and strengthen her feet so very would walk. He told her the friction of the sand-rubing would pull it down, while the sun, water, and earth ould help. Peaches with wide eyes listened, her breath ming faster and faster, until suddenly she leaned forward ad cried: "Rub, Mickey! Rub 'til the blood flies! Rub m hot as hell!"

"Well, Miss Chicken!" he cried in despair.

Peaches buried her shamed face on Peter's breast. He reened her with a big hand.

"Now never you mind! Never you mind!" he reeated. "Everybody turn a deaf ear! That was a slip! lobody heard it! You mean Little Butterfly White, rub hard." Say rub hard and that will fix it!"

"Mickey," she said in a faint voice so subdued and conrite as to be ridiculous, "Mickey-lovest, won't you please o rub hard! Rub jus' as hard!"

Mickey suddenly bent over the bony little foot he was hafing and kissed it.

"Yes darling, I'll rub 'til it a-most bleeds," he said.
When the feet were glowing with alternate sand-rubbing
nd splashing in cold water, Peter looked at his wife.

"I think that's the ticket!" he said. "Nancy, don't ou? That pulls down the blood with rubbing, and drives back with the cold water, and pulls it down, to be pushed

I can't say as we can do this when Peter is busy plowand harvesting, and Junior is away on the cream wagon, Mickey is in town at his work; we can't do just this; there is something we can do that will help the feet e as much. We can bring a bucket of sand up to the se, and set a tub of water in the sun, and you can lie on omfort under an apple tree with Mary and Bobbie to ch you, and every few hours we can take a little time or rubbing and splashing."

My job!" shouted Junior. "I get a bucket and carry the sand!"

I bring the tub and pump the water!" cried Mary.

Me shoo turkey!" announced Bobbie.

I lift the tub to the edge of the shade and carry out Butterfly!" said Peter.

And where do I come in?" demanded Mickey.

Why, Mickey, you 'let' them!" cried Peaches. "You them! An' you earn the money to pay for the new k, when I get strong enough to have it changed, an' the rel man comes! Don't you 'member?"

Sure!" boasted Mickey, taking on height. "I got the gest job of all! I got the job that really does the k, and to-morrow I get right after it. Now I must you back to the house to rest a while."

Aw come on to the barn with me!" begged Junior. t father carry her! Ain't you going to be any comy for me at all?"

Sure!" said Mickey. "Wait a minute! I'd like to o the barn with you."

He dried Peaches' feet with his handkerchief, stuffed his cockings in his pocket, and picked up his shoes.

"Lily, can you let Peter take you back to rest 'til supper me, and let me see what Junior wants to show me?"

"Yes I can," said Peaches. "Yes I can, 'cause I'm a

ame kid; but I don't wish to!"

"Now you look here, Miss Chicken, that hasn't got nything to do with it," explained Mickey. "Every single ime you can't have your way, 'cause it ain't good for ou. If all these nice folks are so kind to you; you must nink part of the time about what they want, and just ow Junior wants me, so you march right along nice and areful with Peter, and pretty soon I'll come."

Peaches pouted a second, then her face cleared by derees, until it lifted to Peter with a smile.

"Peter, will you please to carry me while Mickey does that Junior wants?" she asked with melting sweetness.

y met her with the potato basket. When she I questioningly at the stove, he put in more wood. In to the dining-room and set the table exactly as it en for dinner. He made the trip to the cellar with I brought up bread and milk, while she carried butter eserves. As she told Peter that night, no strange lever had helped her as quickly and understandingly. I dishwashing he was on hand, for he knew that s' fate hung on how much additional work was for Mrs. Harding. That surprised woman found seated in a cool place on the back porch preparing for breakfast, while Mickey washed the dishes, and carried them. Peaches was moved to the couch in ing-room where she could look on.

n wrapped in Bobbie's blanket and held closely in ,'s arms, the child lay quivering with delight while ; car made the trip to the club house, and stopped the trees to show Peaches where Mr. Bruce played, en slowly ran along the country road, with all its nts talking at once in their effort to point out to rything, and no one realized how tired she was, until ing her attention to a colt beside its mother, she to response and it was discovered that she was asleep, rook her home and put her to bed.

CHAPTER XVI

THE FINGERS IN THE PIE

"Strange how women folks get discouraged, right on their job among eir best friends, who would do anything in the world for them, cept just see that a little bit of change would help them." Mickey.

HEN Mickey went to the kitchen the next morning to bring water for the inevitable washing.

Mrs. Harding said to him: "Is it possible that hild is awake this early?"

"No. She is sleeping like she'd never come to," said lickey. "I'll wait'til the last minute before I touch her." emands of her satisfied body wake her up. Then I'd ve to bathe her as a woman would her own, in like case; id cook her such dainties as she should have: things with ts of lime in them. I think her bones haven't been built ght; I believe I could make her fifty per cent better in ree months myself; and as far as taking her away when is week is up, you might as well begin to make different ans right now. If she does well here, and likes it, she n't be taken back where I found her, till cool weather, I can get the consent of my mind to let her go then. I course I know she's yours, and things will be as you y, but think a while before you go against me. If I do I can for her I ought to earn the privilege of having y finger in the pie a little bit."

"So far as Lily goes," said Mickey, "I'd be tickled nost to death. I ain't anxious to pull and haul, and ake up the poor, little sleepy thing. Every morning most makes me sick. I'd a lot rather let her sleep it out you say, but while Lily is mine, and I've got to do the st by her I can, you are Peter's and he must do the st by you he can; and did you notice how he jumped on at washing business yesterday? How we going to square with Peter?"

"I'm perfectly willing to do what I said for the sake that child, who never has had the usual chance of log, till you found her. I've come to be mighty fond of u Mickey, in the little time I've known you; if I didn't e and want to help Peaches I'd do a lot for her, just to ease you—"

change for fifteen years, and I'm sameness of it. I know you'll th "I won't!" interrupted Mickey me! The sameness of it is getting

"Just the way you flew around perfectly amazed me. I never sayou helped me better and with woman I ever hired, and thinking to myself, 'Now if Mickey would with me, it would give me a change more woman's work for him than

"Well never you mind about th of it," said Mickey. "That doesn It's men's work to eat, and I don't that it was any more 'woman's v than it is their own. If there is a Mrs. Harding went to Mickey, took him by the shoulr, turned him toward the back door and piloted him to e porch, where she pointed east indicating an open It began as high as his head against the side of the arding back wall and ran straight. It crossed the vard tween trees that through no design at all happened to and in line with those of the orchard so that they formed narrow emerald wall on each side of a green-carpeted ace that led to the meadow, where it widened, ran down l and crossed lush grass where cattle grazed. Then it nbed a far hill, tree crested, cloud capped, and in a mist zlory the faint red of the rising sun worked colour mires with the edges of cloud rims, tinted them with flushes rose, lavender, streaks of vivid red, and a broad stripe pale green. Alone, on the brow of the hill, stood one nt old apple tree, the remains of an early-day orchard. was widely branching, symmetrically outlined, backed 1 coloured by cloud wonder, above and around it. The man pointed down the avenue with a shaking finger, and "See that Mickey? Start slow and get all of it. erv time I've stepped on this back porch for fifteen ars, summer or winter. I've seen that just as it is now as it was three weeks ago when the world was blooma or as it will be in the red and gold of fall, or the later lys and browns, and when it's ice coated, and the sun nes up. I think sometimes it will kill me. I've negted my work to stand staring, many's the time in sumr, and I've taken more than one chill in winter-I've tried show Peter, and a few times I've suggestedyears ago: cried Mickey.

"Why so I had!" exclaimed Mrs to think of it, I've mentioned that too. But Mickey, what I started been perfectly possessed to follow a sun rise while sitting under that all have I got to the place where churning, or a baby, or visitors, o some reason why I couldn't go. sure as you're a foot high, I've got soon now, or my family is going to night thinking it over for the thomyself: since he's so handy, if he'c one morning, just one morning—

Mickey handed her a sun hat.

"G'wan!" he said gruffly. "I'll do it right, and Lily can have her sl

atural expression on her face. He rolled his sleeves stepped into the dining-room. By the time Peter and ior came with big buckets of milk, Mickey had the im separator rinsed and together, as he had helped s. Harding fix it the day before. With his first glance er inquired: "Where's Ma?"

She's doing something she's been crazy to for fifteen rs," answered Mickey calmly, as he set the gauge poured in the first bucket of milk.

Which ain't answering where she is."

So 'tain't!" said Mickey, starting the machine. "Well ou'll line up, I'll show you. Train your peepers down t green subway, and on out to glory as presented by Almighty in this particular stretch of country, and : beyond your cows there you'll see a spot about as as Bobbie, and that will be your nice lady heading light for sunrise. She said she'd wanted to go for fif-1 years, and there always had been churning, or baking, something, so this morning, as there wasn't a thing what I could do as good as she could, why we made it that I'd finish her work and let her see her sunrise. e she seems to be set on it; and when she gets back 's going to wash and dress Lily for a change. Strange women folks get discouraged on their job, among their t friends, who would do anything in the world for them, ot just to see that a little bit of change would help m. It will be a dandy scheme for Lily, 'cause it lets get her sleep out, and it will be good for you, 'cause Ars. Harding doesn't get to sit under that apple tree

and can't remember where they not there yet. She's ahead of the to sit under that apple tree an she hadn't got there this morning a-begun to get mixed, I could see Hall."

"Mickey, what else can you see "Enough to make your head sw "Out with it!" ordered Peter.

"Well," said Mickey gravely, on the separator, but covertly wayou'd a-cut that window she's waright over her table there where thabeen seeing that particular bit Peter, that probably there's nothin just the little spot she's been pining self, and you'll see, there she's ju

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ow what she wants; but from one day here, I could tell u things she should have."

"Well go ahead and tell," said Peter.

"Will you agree not to break my neck 'til I get this eam in the can, and what she keeps strained, and these ickets washed?" asked Mickey. "I want to have her b all done when she gets back, 'cause I promised her, and at's quite a hike she's taking."

"Well I was 'riled' for a minute, but I might as well hold yself," said Peter. "Looks like you were right."

"Strangers coming in can always see things that folks the job can't," consoled Mickey.

"Well go on and tell me what you've seen here Mickey!"
Mickey hoisted the fourth bucket.

"Well, I've seen the very nicest lady I ever saw, expting my mother," said Mickey. "I've seen a man out your size, that I like better than any man I know, rring Mr. Douglas Bruce, and the bar is such a little e it would take a microscope to find it." Peter laughed, sich was what Mickey hoped he would do, for he drew leep breath and went on with greater assurance: "I've en a place that I thought was a new edition of Heaven, d it is, only it needs a few modern improvements—"
"Yes Mickey! The window, and what else?"

"You haven't looked at what I told you to about the ndow yet," said Mickey.

"Well since you insist on it, I will," said Peter.

"And while you are in there," suggested Mickey, "after u finish with that strip of brown oilcloth and the a long time, and then came amaz sympathetically as Peter emerged 1

"And you're about the finest r commented Mickey, still busy with see what a comfort this separator only thing your nice lady has got your work it takes quite a large bu Junior was showing me last night a those machines were made for. Yo was money for a hay rake, and a n wheel plow, and a disk, and a reapt corn planter, and a corn cutter, ar windmill, and a silo, and an automouthere should have been enough for pump inside, and a kitchen sink, and dish-washer; and if there wasn't a

dy has. The things she should have would cost ring, cost a lot for all I know, but I bet what she wouldn't take half the things in the building Junior I me did; and it couldn't be the start of what a sick nd doctor bills, and strange women coming and god abusing you and the children would cost——" at up!" cried Peter. "That will do! Now you lisme young man. Since you are so expert at seeing and since you've traded work with my wife, to rest changing her job, suppose you just keep your eyes and make out a list of what she should have to doork convenient and easy as can be, and of course, tably. That stove's hot yet! And breakfast been hour too! Nothing like it must be going full blast, ings steaming and frying!"

re!" said Mickey.

itch a few days, and then we'll talk it over. If it train time, ride down with Junior, and I'll stay in use till she comes. I guess Little White Butterfly wake up; and if she does, she'll be all right with me. dresses herself and Bobbie. Is Mary helping her ht?"

ell some," said Mickey. "Not all she could! But sing care of Bobbie is a big thing. Junior could do things, but he doesn't seem to see them, and—" d so could I?" asked Peter. "Is that the ticket?" s," said Mickey.

right young man," said Peter. "Fix us over! ready for anything that will benefit Ma. She's

minutes for the trolley. He sat in which to search for headlines. he could dispose of enough to ke that night, sure of her safety and oured by what Mrs. Harding had a rosy glow it almost hurt his n in greater freedom from care th He sat straighter, and curiously v car. When they entered the city his street near the business centre hiding himself watched for the p old route. Before long it came, such good imitation of his tone an grew grave and a half-jealous little "Course we're better off,"

"Course I can't go back now, an

er a paper was sold, until he was sure that his men were tronizing his substitute, then he overtook him.

"Good work, kid!" he applauded. "Been following you d you're doing well. Lemme take a paper a second. s, I thought so! You're leaving out the biggest scoop the sheet! Here, give them a laugh on this 'Chasing rinkles.' How did you come to slide over it and not mp enough to wake you up. Get on this sub-line, lales seeking beauty doctors to renew youth.'"

"How would you cry it?" asked the boy.

"Aw looky! Looky!" Mickey shouted, holdz his side with one hand and waving a paper with the "All the old boys hiking to the beauty parlours. nking up the glow of youth to beat Billie Burke. Corner icicles; Billie gets left, 'cause the boys are using all of em! Oh my! Wheel o' time oiled with cold cream d reversed with an icicle! Morning paper! Tells you w to put the cream on your face 'stead of in the coffee! ick your head in the ice box at sixty, and come out sixen! Awah get in line, gentlemen! Don't block traffic!" When the policemen scattered the crowd Mickey's subtute had not a paper remaining, and with his pocket Il of change he was running to the nearest stand for a sh supply. Mickey went with him and watched with itical eye while the boy tried a reproduction of what he lled "a daily scream!" The first time it was rather flat. "You ain't going at it right!" explained Mickey. "'Fore u can make anybody laugh on this job, you must see e fun of life yourself. Beauty parlours have always

she used icicles on her face to p a-knowed this like you should, your peepers on that, 'Chasing V where your laugh came in to-day and over you must get it. Bet C purpose for me. Which same been calling the Hoc de Geezer v champeen of Mexico, and the p thing fine; but did you sell out topknot! You lost your load on of life soaked in your system good. self see the plutes, and the magna leaving their jobs, and hiking to beat the dames at their daily stur icicled and-it's funny! When i you just howl about it, why it's ca me catch them with it? Now go started down the street glancing at clocks he was ng, with nimble feet threading the crowds until he ned the Herald office; there he dodged in and making av to the editorial desk he waited his chance. w an instant of pause in the work of the busy man. arted his cry: "Morning papers! I like to sell them!" so on to the "Chasing Wrinkles." There because he excited, for he knew that his reception would depend w good a laugh he gave them. Mickey outdid himself. rters waiting assignments crowded around him; Mr. fner beckoned, and Mickey stepped to him. 'ound it all right, did you, young man?" he scream lifted the load!" cried Mickey. vaste, and wickedness, didn't get a look in." thought you'd like that!" laughed the editor. liggest scoop yet!" said Mickey. "Why it took the e to scatter the crowd. They struggled to get papers. ney looked like the bird on the coin they were passing ving to escape the awful things it goes through on the y, and get back to nature where perfectly good birds g. Honest, they did!" lave you any poetry for me yet?" lo, but I'm headed that way," answered Mickey. low so?" inquired the editor. Vhy I've got another kid so he can do my stunt 'til dy knows the difference, and I've gone into Mr.

louglas Bruce?" queried Mr. Chaffner.
'es," said Mickey. "He's my boss, and say, he's the

e's office, and we're after the grafters."

" What?"

Mickey staggered and stared. breath.

"Mr. Bruce and Miss Leslie defended. "They all the time t "What?"

"Why that they are going to Bruce gets the grafter who's r Multiopolis, and collects his big As suddenly as he had arise

As suddenly as he had arise back, and in a stupefied way sti in equal daze Mickey watched with me," Mr. Chaffner said risin room and closed the door.

"Now you tell me all about this "Maybe they don't want it i Mickey. "I guess I'll let Mr. Bi

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reed. "You have a long head, young man. And so think Miss Leslie Winton is a fine young lady?"

"Surest thing you know," said Mickey. "Why let me Il you--"

And then in a few swift words, with broad strokes, lickey sketched in the young woman so intelligent she ad selected him from all the other "newsies" by a scription, and sent him to Mr. Bruce; how she had dolls ady to give away, and poor children might ride in her ar; how she lived with "darling old Daddy," and there lickey grew enthusiastic, and told of the rest house, and sen the renting of the cabin on Atwater by the most autiful and considerate of daughters for her father and ar lover, and when he could not think of another comendatory word to say, Mickey paused, while a dazed man suttered a word so low the boy scarcely heard it.

"I don't know why you say that!" cried Mickey.

"Ommh!" said Mr. Chaffner, slowly, "I don't either, aly I didn't understand they were engaged. It's my busitess to find and distribute news, and get it fresh, 'scoop it,' our term is, and so, Mickey, when investigations are bing on, and everybody knows a denou—a big surprise is aming, in order to make sure that my paper gets in on be ground floor, I make some investigation for myself, and sometimes by accident, sometimes by intuition, somemes by sharp deduction we happen to land before the inestigators. Of course we have personal, financial, and olitical reasons for not spoiling the game. Now we aven't gone into the City Hall investigation as Bruce has

going to rush in and spoil his so know who he's after, himself. times. I tell him how I've sold he's chasing get their dose, an can't ever face men straight aga stealing, and cut where it will payers must be exposed. I toloprised, and maybe he'd be sort be stopped, no matter who gets "Well he's got his nerve!" crie "Yes!" agreed Mickey. "He no other men worth saving could

no other men worth saving could wished the men he was after wou he gets them, but he goes right c "Mickey, you figure closer th

"In one way I do," conceded

ooks and theories are all right, but there are times when man comes a cropper on them. You watch, and if you link he's riding for a fall, you come skinning and tell me, ot over the 'phone, come and tell me. Here, take this, it ill get you to me any time, no matter where I am or hat I'm doing. Understand?"

"You think Mr. Bruce is going to get into trouble?"
"His job is to get other people into trouble——"

"But he says he ain't got a thing to do with it," said lickey. "He says they get themselves into trouble."

"That's so too," commented Mr. Chaffner. "Anyway, eep your mouth tight shut, and your eyes wide open, and you think your boss is getting into deep water, you come nd tell me. I want things to go right with you, because 'm depending on that poem for my front page, soon."

Mickey held out his hand.

"Sure!" he agreed. "I'm in an awful good place now p work up the poetry piece, being right out among the pws and clover. And about Mr. Bruce, gee! I wish he pas plowing corn. I just hate his job he's doing now. Thanks Boss!" Mickey had lost time, and he hurried, but things seemed be happening, for as he left the elevator and sped down he hall, he ran into Mr. James Minturn. With a hasty lance he drew back, and darted for the office door. Mr. linturn's face turned a dull red.

[&]quot;One minute, young man!" he called.

[&]quot;I'm late," said Mickey shortly. "I must hurry."

afflicted with smallpox," said M

"If your blood is right, sm Mickey. "I haven't a picture that, if it really wanted a word v

"But you have a picture of you

"I've noticed it on occasions ous that others, no doubt, will Minturn. "If you are all Bru should give a man credit for w surprised me too deeply for w brought me one day. I knew m perience, better than you did, thing that shocked me speechless time to adjust myself, I made th

gested, and proved what you sa

ave you sized up something scandalous. And yet I In't quite make out how, if my view was right, Mr. e and Miss Leslie would think so much of you."

'hey are friends I'm proud to have," said Mr. Min-"And I hope you'll consider being a friend to me,

to my boys also. If ever a time comes when I can do ning for you, let me know."

low right on that point, pause a moment," said ey. "You are a friend to my boss?"

certainly am, and I'm under deep obligations to Miss on. If ever my home becomes once more what it was art with, it will be her work. Could a man bear ier obligation than that?"

Vell hardly," said Mickey. "Course there wouldn't rever be anything you could do for Miss Leslie that d square that deal; but I'm worried about my boss thing awful."

Vhy Mickey?" asked Mr. Minturn.

"hat investigation you started him on."

did start him on that. What's the matter?"

Vell the returns are about all in," said Mickey, "and nan who draws the candy suit is about ready to put. See?"

Good! Exactly what he should do."

es exactly," agreed Mickey dryly, "but who do figure it is? We got some good friends in the City

Ilways is somebody you don't expect," said Mr. Min-"Don't waste any sympathy on them, Mickey." "What!"

Mr. Minturn seized the boy's his door and closed it. Mickey I a belligerent face upward.

"Now nix on knocking me down he cried. "I just been hammer dragged into his room, and shu about twenty minutes ago."

"The devil you say!" exploded "No, I said Chaffner!" insist of the Herald. I'm going to wriftont page, some day soon now. all my life."

"And so you're a friend of Ch:
"Oh not bosom and insepar:
"I haven't seen so awful much c
get along fine."

Mickey, you will promise me something?" asked Mr. Iturn. "You see I started Mr. Bruce on this trying to him to a case that would bring him into prominence, f it should go wrong, it's in a way through me. If you k Douglas is unlike himself, or worried, will you tell Will you?"

Why surest thing you know!" cried Mickey. "Why sould say I would! Gee, you're great too! I think like you awful well when we get acquainted."

lickey was busy when Bruce entered, and with him Leslie Winton. They brought the breath of spring lowing into summer, freighted with emanations of real touched and tinctured with joy so habitual it had me spontaneous on the part of Leslie Winton, and this ning contagious with Douglas Bruce. Mickey stood it, watched them closely, and listened. So in three utes, from ragged scraps and ejaculations effervescing a what was running over in their brains, he knew that r had taken an early morning plunge into Atwater. led a black bass, had a breakfast of their own making, east in so far as gathering wild red raspberries from the I pit near the bridge; and then they had raced to the tiopolis station to start Mr. Winton on a trip west to to sell his interest in some large land holdings there, the of which he was finding burdensome.

Heavens, how I hope Daddy makes that sale!" cried ie. "I've been so worried about him this summer." I wondered at you not going with him," said Douglas. He didn't seem to want me," said Leslie. "He said it

"Have you any idea what troubles

"Of course! He told me!" s Swain. When Daddy was a boy father's best friend, and when gran him to guide Daddy, and he not opened his purse and started him Swain is growing old, and some o gone wrong; just when political of close as could be, he lost heavily; a There was no way but for Daddy to save what he could for him. fall; we talked of it again in the most of all—I've told you!"

"Yes I know! I wish I could he "I do too! I wish it intensely, father comes, we'll ask him. We

"To help Mr. Swain," said Leslie.

"He's going to use his fortune?" queried Douglas.

"I don't know that Daddy has holdings large enough to leserve the word," said Leslie. "He's going to use what he has. I urged him to; it's all he can do."

"Did you take into consideration that it may end in his ailure?" asked Douglas.

"I did," said Leslie, "and I forgot to tell him, but I will as soon as he comes back: he can have all mother left me, :00, if he needs it."

"Leslie, you're a darling, but have you ever had even a small taste of poverty?" asked Douglas.

"No! But I've always been curious, if I did have, to see if I couldn't so manage whatever might be my share, that it would appear to the world without that peculiar state of grime which always seems to distinguish it," said the girl. "I'm not afraid of poverty, and I'm not afraid of work; it's dishonour that would kill me. Daddy accepted obligations; if they involve him, which includes me also, then to the last cent we possess, we pay back."

Mickey drew the duster he handled between vacuum days across a table and steadily watched first Douglas, then Leslie, both of whom had forgotten him.

"That should be good enough for Daddy; what about me?" asked Douglas. "If ever I get in a close place, does the same hold good?"

"If I know what you are doing, surely!"

"I knew you were a 'Bearer of Morning' first time I saw 'ou," said Douglas. "But we are forgetting Mickey."

want to bother you when your head investigation and your own moving

11 CAL AL ALEEP ...

"Did you hear that Leslie?" he as my investigation as much as the short is going to, any day now. So to the country? You should have

"I'm sorry if you don't like it, see my room was getting awful h days this time of year, and nigh escape; all right for me, but it wou should I have told you?"

"Because Miss Winton had pl Douglas. "She intended to tal she even contemplated having you."

Mickey's eyes danced and over

"Thank you for thinking of it, and planning for her," he said. "I was afraid you would."

"Thank me for something you feared I would do! Mickey, aren't you getting things mixed?"

"Thank you for thinking of Lily and wanting to help her," explained Mickey, "but she doesn't need you. She's mine and I'm going to keep her; and what I can do for her will have to be enough, until I can do better."

"I see," said Leslie. "But suppose that she should have attention at once, that you can't give her, and I can?"

"Then I'd be forced to let you, even if it took her from me," agreed Mickey. "But thank the Lord, things ain't that way. I didn't take my say-so for it; I went to the head nurse of the Star of Hope; she's gone to the new Elizabeth Home now; she loves to nurse children best. All the time from the first day she's told me how, and showed me, so Lily has been taken care of right, you needn't worry about that. And where she is now, if she was a queenlady she couldn't have grander; honest she couldn't!"

"But Mickey, how are you going to pay for all that?" queried Douglas.

"Easy as falling off a car in a narrow skirt," said Mickey.
"'Member that big house where things are Heaven-white, and a yard full of trees, and the fence corners are cut with the shears, and the street—I mean the road—swept with a broom, this side the golf grounds about two miles?"

"Yes," said Douglas. "The woman there halted my car one evening and spoke to me about you."

"Oh she did?" exclaimed Mickey. "Well I hope you

ever be the least bother. Next a and got on her knees, just like y went sailing to the country in a b isn't coming back 'til my rooms spared then."

"But how are you going to pay, only take children for a week-----

"Yes I know," said Mickey. "
ever tried it before, and they do
we're doing it our own way, and it v
"If they are suited——" said D

good woman, and that place is fa feel so comfortable."

"We started this morning," so and I traded jobs; she sat on a l and watched sunrise. I washed cream, and scrubbed the porch fo Mickey laughed, and Leslie sent a slightly frowning glance toward Douglas.

"You can search me!" cried the boy, throwing out his hands in his familiar gesture. "Why I just love to! I always helped mother! Pay? I'll pay all right; the nice lady will say I do, and so will Peter. It's my most important job to make her glad of me as I am of her. And if you put it up to me, I'd a lot rather have my job than yours; and I bet I get more joy from it for my family!"

"Croaker!" laughed Bruce.

"'Tain't going to be a scream for the fellow who comes short," warned Mickey.

"So you're planning not to allow me to do anything for Lily?" inquired Miss Winton.

"Well there's something you can do this minute if you'd like," said Mickey. "I was going to hurry up and see my Sunshine Nurse, but it's a long way to the new hospital, and you could do as well, if you would."

"Mickey, I'd love to. What is it? And may I see your family? You know I haven't had a peep yet."

"Well soon now, you may," said Mickey. "You see I ain't quite ready."

"Mickey, what do you know about the new Elizabeth Home?" asked Douglas.

"Only that a rich lady gave her house and money, and that my Sunshine Nurse is going to be there after this. I was going for my first trip to-night."

"I wondered," said Douglas. "Mickey, when you get there, you'll find that you've been there before." "Yes. I guess I must kind o noticed it; I didn't know I did, I told me his troubles by force. We Say, he's just fine when you know seem to be a thing on earth he wo Leslie. Why he said if ever he fou his home become what it should, i were sorry for him, and fixed thin

"Mickey, did he really?" rejoic when may Mickey show me what

"Right now," he answered. 'while he was away yesterday and yet. Now is the best time."

When Mickey made a leap from that night, at what he already he Junction, he was almost buried un

tailed inspection. He opened his lips and closed them for lack of the right word, while he slowly and smilingly shook his head. Peaches leaned forward and reached toward him; her greeting was indescribably sweet. Mickey dropped the bundles and went into her arms; even in his joy he noted a new strength in their grip on him, an unusual clinging. He drew back half alarmed.

"You been a good girl?" he queried suspiciously.

"Jus' as good!" asserted Peaches.

"You didn't go and say any----?"

"Not ever Mickey-lovest! Not one!" she cried. "I ain't even thinked one! That will help, Peter says so!"

"You have been washed and fed and everything all right?" he proceeded.

"Jus' as right!" she insisted.

"You like the nice lady?" he went on.

"Jus' love the nice lady, an' Mary, an' Bobbie, an' Peter, an' Junior, jus' love all of them!" she affirmed.

"Well I hope I don't bust!" he said. "I never was so glad as I am that everything is good for you."

"They's two things that ain't good."

"Well if things ain't right here, with what everybody's doing for you, they ought to be!" cried Mickey. "You cut complaining right out, Miss Chicken!"

"You forgot to set my lesson, an' I ain't had my po'try piece for two days. That ain't complainin'."

"No 'tain't honey," conceded Mickey regretfully. "No 'tain't! That's just all right. I thought you were going to start kicking, and I wasn't going to stand for it.

know how it goes 'til atterwara.

"What you going to do?" she all the bundles? My they look ex "And so they are!" triumphed all the folks? Do they leave you "No, they don't leave me alon in the room," said Peaches. "The went away 'cause they know far sometimes. Ain't they smart to "They are!" said Mickey. "I bed a little while. I got somethin "Ooh Mickey! Those bundles "Now you hold on," ordered N see, Miss!"

Mickey carried her in and genhe returned for the boxes. He selected a pair of pink stocking "Young ladies who are going automobiling and taking ralks are well enough to have dresses, and things that all rood girls have," he announced. "But I'm a little dubious bout how these things go. Will you dress her?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Harding. "You fill the water bucket and the wood box, and start the fire for supper."

Mrs. Harding looked over the contents of the box and from plain soft pieces of underwear chose a gauze shirt, a dainty combination suit and a tucked and trimmed petticoat, while Peaches laughed and sobbed for pure joy. Then Mickey came, and Mrs. Harding went away. After various trials he decided on a white dress with pink ribbons run in the neck, sleeves, and belt, slipping it on her and carefully fastening it.

"Mickey, I want the glass!" she begged. "Please, oh please hurry, Mickey."

"Now you just wait, Miss Chicken!" said Mickey.

Then he brushed her hair and put on a new pink ribbon, not so large as those she had, but much more becoming. He laid a soft warm little gray sweater with white collar and cuffs in reach, and in turning it she discovered a hand-kerchief and a pair of gloves in one pocket. Immediately she searched the other and produced a purse with five pennies in it. Then for no reason at all, Peaches began to cry.

"Well Miss Chicken!" exclaimed Mickey in surprise, "I thought you'd be pleased!"

"Pleased!" sobbed Peaches. "Pleased! Mickey, I'm dam—I'm busted!"

"Oh well then, go on and cry, if you want to," agreed

while the Harding family came in wait. Mickey raised and put in I the crowning glory of any small pink parasol. Peaches appeared faint were imminent.

"Now do you see why I couldi piece when my head was so full of a "Yes Mickey, but you will befo "You want it even now?" he ma "More 'an the passol, even!" showed. Well you fool little sweet kinchoked. He fled around the hou

choked. He fled around the hou In his ears as he went sounded Pe delighted cries of the family.

"I want Mickey!" wailed Peach He heard her call and ran back be so slow reaching her that Pete d drew back. She cried, "Aw-w-ah!" in a harsh, If-scared voice. She gripped Mickey with one hand id the parasol with the other; she leaned and peeped. ed marvelled, and smiled at a fully clothed little girl in e glass, and the image smiled back. Peaches thought letting go of Mickey to touch her hat and straighten er skirt, but felt so lost without him, that she handed ter the parasol, and used that hand, while the other ung to her refuge. When Mickey saw the treasure go his favour, he swallowed lumps of emotion so big that e Hardings could see them running down his throat. eaches intent on the glass smiled, grimaced, tilted her ad, and finally began flirting outrageously with herself, itil all of them laughed and recalled her. She looked Peter, smiled her most winsome smile and exclaimed: Well ain't I the-"

[&]quot;Now you go easy, Miss Chicken," warned Mickey.

[&]quot;Mickey, if you hadn't stopped me I'd done it sure!" bbed Peaches, collapsing against him. "'F I had, would u a-took these bu'ful things 'way from me?"

[&]quot;No I wouldn't!" said Mickey. "I couldn't to save me. at I should!"

[&]quot;Mickey, I'm so tired," she said. "Take my hat an' it it where I can see it, an' my passol, an' my coat; gee, don't have to be wrapped in sheets no more, an' lay me wn. Quick Mickey, I'm sick-like."

[&]quot;Well I ought to had the sense not to spring so much all once," said Mickey, "but it all seemed to belong. Sure will, you poor kid!"

little garments, and showed ner changes she would need, even two fi She left the coat, hat, and parasol ir resolutely took up her pencil and lines without knowing enough of understand; but she was extremely one word that Mickey had said "ju when he looked at her," and in hover her new possessions she was concerning them. Most of all she slippers. A hundred times that down, wiggled her toes and move better, and each time her joy in for walking intoxicated her. Bet over and over:

LILY

Miss L. P. O'Halloran daily wen

Peter came in to visit a few minutes, and she gave him slate to see if he could read her copy, and by this ruse found what the lines were. She was so overjoyed she ened her lips and then clapped both hands over them, to other the ejaculation at her tongue's end. To distract ter she stuck out her foot and moved it for him to see.

"Ain't they pretty, an' jus' as soft and fine?" she asked, "Yes," said Peter. "They remind me of a flower called ady Slipper,' that grows along the edge of the woods. a that shape and the prettiest gold yellow, but little, by'd about fit your doll."

"Oh Peter, could you get me one? I want to see."

"Why I would, but they are all gone now, honey," swered Peter. "Next year I'll remember and bring u some when they bloom. But it's likely by that time u can go yourself, and see them."

"Do you honest think it Peter?" asked Peaches, leang forward eagerly.

"Yes I honest think it," repeated Peter emphatically.

"But I won't be here then," Peaches reminded him.

"Well it won't be my fault, if you're not," said Peter.

"You can busy yourself planning h over, so it will bring all the joy of life 1

"I remember," said Peter.

morning if you want to. Ma; and if you're bound to leave us, better time. I can get Jud Jason for me, and I'll do the best I can that we'd be partners and work if you have decided upon leavir be satisfied till you've done it."

"Well I can try," said Junior can come back."

"I don't know about that,

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y slowly became a greenish white colour; but the n had been discussed so often, it worried her llv. and now that it had to be met, evasion would good. Peter grimly watched her. He knew she uggling with a woman's inborn impulse to be the of her children, her son, her first-born, especially. surprised to hear her saying: "Why I hardly think or, it wouldn't be a right start in life. You must 1at whatever kind of work you find, or whoever you or, there will be things you won't like or think fair, ou are going to be your own man, you must begin an; and of course a man doesn't go into business with d made up to run for his mother's petticoats, the ng that displeases him. No, I guess if you go, you art with your mind made up to stay till the October school opens, anyway."

n we'll call that settled," said Peter. "You may Mickey on the Monday morning car and we probon't see you again till you are one of the leading s men of Multiopolis, and drive out in your auto-Have you decided which make you'll get?"

Il from what I've learned driving yours, if I were one myself, I'd get a Glide-by," said Junior. strike me as the best car on the market."

glanced sharply at his son, and when he saw that wer was perfectly sincere, his heart almost played trick he had expected from his wife.

right Ma, gather up his clothes and get them, and have him ready," said Peter.

"I thought maybe you'd take me in the car and sort look around with me," said Junior.

"I don't see how I am going to do it, with both o work piled on me," said Peter. "And besides, I'm farmer born and bred; I wouldn't have the first idea abo how to get a boy a job in the city or what he ought to or have. Mickey is on to all that; he'll go with you, we you Mickey?"

"Sure!" said Mickey. "And you can save a lot lusing my room. It is high, but it's clean"—Junior scowl but Mickey proceeded calmly—"and while it gets hot int daytime, if you open the door at night, and push the before the window, it soon cools off, and very hottest tim I always take to the fire-escape. It's nice and cool them.

"Of course! That will be the ticket," said Peter hea ily. "A boy starting with everything to learn could expect to earn much and when you haven't Ma and me "Well, 'without,'" said Mickey, "I'd keep my lamps rimmed and burning, and I'd catch a lady falling off a ar, or pick up a purse, or a kid, or run an errand. 'With,' here'd be only one thing I'd think of, because papers are my game. I'd buy one for a penny and sell it for two; my two, sell for four; you know the multiplication table, on't you? But of course you don't want a street job, ou want in a factory or a store. If you could do what ou like best, what would it be Junior?"

Junior opened his mouth several times and at last aditted he hadn't thought that far: "Why I don't know."
"Well," said Mickey calmly, "there's making things,
at's factories. There's selling them, that's stores.
here's doctors, and lawyers, that's professional, like
y boss. And there's office-holders, like the men he is
ter, but of course you'd have to be old enough to
re and educated enough to do business, and have
rough money earned at something else to buy your office;
at's too far away. Now if you don't like the street,
ere's the other three. The quickest money would be
the first two. If you was making things, what would
u make?"

[&]quot;Automobiles!" said Junior.

[&]quot;All right!" said Mickey, "we can try them first. If e can't find a factory that you'd like, what would you ther sell?"

[&]quot;Automobiles," said Junior promptly.

[&]quot;Gee!" said Mickey. "I see where we hit that busiss at both ends. If we miss, what next?"

"I don't know," said Junior.

"Well how am I going to know what to try for, if you don't even know what you want?" asked Mickey.

"I'll make up my mind when I have looked around some," said Junior.

"You can come closer deciding out here, than you can in the rush of the streets," said Mickey. "There, you'll be rustling for your supper, and you'll find boys hunting jobs thick as men at a ball game, and lots of them with dads to furnish their room and board."

Junior hesitated, but Mickey excused himself and without having been told what to do, he accomplished half a day's work for Mrs. Harding, then began some of Peter's jobs and afterward turned his attention to hearing Peaches' lesson and setting her new copy. When Junior paid his fare Monday morning, Mickey, judging by the change he exhibited, realized that both his mother and father had ntil the money disappeared, the quicker it went the better.

s he ate his sandwich and drank his milk, he watched unior making a dinner of meat, potatoes, pie and iceteam, and made a mental estimate of the remains of the ther dollar. As a basis for a later "I told you so," he monstrated, and pointed out the fact that there were midreds of unemployed men of strength, skilled artisans the families to support, looking for work that minute.

"I know your dad signed up that contract with Jud son," he said, "'cause I saw him, and that means that 's got no use for you for three months; so you must take re of yourself for that long at least, if you got any ginger you. Of course," explained Mickey, "I know that most y men think country boys won't stick, and are big wards, but I'm expecting you to show them just where ey are mistaken. I know you're not lazy, and I know u got as much sand and grit as any city boy, but you ast prove it to the rest of them. You must show up!" "Sure!" said Junior. "I'll convince them!"

By night the last penny of the second dollar was gone,
Junior borrowed his fare to his room from Mickey, who
to remain with him to show him the way back and
rth, and to spend an early hour in search of employment.
was Mickey's first night away from Peaches, and while
knew she was safe, he felt that when night came she
ruld miss him, and the thought that she might cry for
m, tormented him to speech. He pointed out to Junior
ray clearly that he would have to mark corners and keep
beyes open because he need not expect that he could

leave her longer than that. Junior agreed with him, he had promised Peaches in saying good-bye to ke Mickey only one night. He had understood by her waving voice and evident anxiety, that with darkness Mickey was expected and essential to her comfort.

He had treated himself to candy and unusual fru until his money was gone, and by night these and walk of miles on hot pavement had bred such an appet that he felt he had not eaten a full meal in years, when Mickey brought out the remains of the food M Harding had given him, her son felt insulted. I Mickey figured a day on the basis of what he had earn what he had expended, what he must save to be rea when the great surgeon came, and prepared exactly as would have done for himself and Peaches. On reach the tenement and climbing until his legs ached, Junfaced stifling heat but Mickey opened the wind

e, for the first few days Mickey honestly and unceas-Ly hunted employment. With Junior at his elbow he Fered one rebuff after another, until it was clear to him et it was impossible for a country boy unused to the ys of the city to find or to hold a job at which he ald survive, even with his room provided, while the warmed with unemployed men. Everywhere they and the work they would have liked done by an Italian. eek. Swede, German, or Polander who seemed strong as en, oblivious, as no doubt they were, to treatment Junnever had seen accorded a balky mule, and able to live a chunk of black bread, a bit of cheese, and a few cents' eth of stale beer. When Mickey had truly convinced himf of what he had believed, with a free conscience he then gan allowing Junior to find out for himself exactly what was facing. By that time Junior had lost himself on the w to Mickey's rooms, spent a night wandering the streets. d breakfastless was waiting before the Iriquois.

Mickey listened sympathetically, supplied a dime, nich seemed to be all he had, for breakfast, and said as entered the building: "Well kid, 'til we can find a job m'll just have to go up against the street. If I can live id save money at it, you ought to be smart enough to w. Go to it 'til I get my day's work done. You just n't go home, because they'll think you don't amount anything; and the fellows will make game of you, and mides Jud is doing wonderfully well, your father said so. E seemed so tickled over him, I guess the fact is he is atting more help from him than he ever did from Junior

boy, so your job there isn't open. Go at whatevery can see that needs to be done, 'til I get my work of and we'll try again. I'll be out about three, and you of meet me here."

Empty and disheartened Junior squeezed the dimea hurried toward the nearest restaurant. But the tra action had been witnessed by a boy as hungry as he a hardened to the street. How Junior came to be sprawl on the sidewalk he never knew; only that his hand in untarily opened in falling as he threw it out to catch hi self, so he couldn't find the dime. Before noon he wass and reeling with sleeplessness and hunger. He was w ing when it was Mickey's time to lunch, but he did come, and in desperation Junior really tried the stre At last he achieved a nickel by snatching a drop bundle from under a car. He sat a long time in a st way looking at it, and then having reached a stage w he was more sick, and less hungry, he hunted a teleph booth and tried to get his home, only to learn that family was away. Gladdened by the thought that t might be in the city, he walked miles, watching the c before stores where they shopped, searching for their and he told himself that if he found it, nothing could arate him from the steering gear until he sped past regulation straight to his mother's cupboard.

He had wanted ham and chicken in the beginning; helping himself to cold food in the cellar seemed a lux then crackers and cookies in the dining-room cupbe would have satisfied his wildest desire; and before the

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lock, Junior, in mad rebellion, remembered his mother's p bucket. How did she dare put big pieces of bread I things good enough for any one to eat in feed for pigs I poultry! If he ever reached home he resolved he uld put a stop to that. And if he ever got back from hurry and bustle of the streets, to the quiet of the hway and the delectable autocracy of the cream wagon, ere half the neighbours handed him cookies, and doughts, and hot bread heels spread with clover butter and ney, he would never again leave it.

He began watching the people to see if he really were only hungry one in the crowds, and in his study for signs poverty, he suddenly became shocked and amazed to see same evidence of suffering, unrest, and mental hunger the faces of people whose manner of dress and mode of wel indicated wealth.

At three to Mickey's cheerful, "Now we'll find a job make it," he answered: "No we will find a square meal steal it," and then he told. Mickey watched him rectively, but as he figured the case, it was not for him to gest retreat. He condoled, paid for the meal, and arted hunting work again, with Junior silent and dogged side him. To the surprise of both, almost at once they and a place for a week with a florist.

Junior went to work. After a few tasks bunglingly formed, he was tried on messenger service and started th his carfare to deliver a box containing a funeral ce. He had no idea where he was to go, or what car to take. In his extremity a bootblack came to his aid.

He safely delivered the box at a residence where the owns was leaving his door for his car. He gave Junior half dollar, and went his way. Junior met the first friendle greeting he had encountered in Multiopolis, as he readed the street.

Two boys larger than he walked beside him and talker so frankly, that before he reached his car line, he felt is had made friends. They offered to show him a short cut to the car line just by going up an alley and out to a side street. At the proper place for seclusion, the observed him of money, and both fled. Junior lay for a time, then slowly came back, but he was weak and if the knew without investigating what had happened, as preferring the mercy that might be inside to that of the alley, he crawled into a back door. It proved to be

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fectly discernible bumps to prove it, he was discharged a fool for following strangers into an alley.

Ik the miles to his room. When he found the building thought it would be cooler to climb the fire-escape and on it until he decided what to do, then he could open door from the inside. At the top he thrust a foot, head, I shoulders into the room and realized he had selected wrong escape. He tried to draw back, but two men ped for him, and as he was doubled in the window he ald not make a swift movement.

He was landed in the middle of the room, cursed for a wling thief, his protestations silenced, his pockets erched, and when they yielded nothing, his body stripped its clean, wholesome clothing and he was pitched down stairs. He appealed to several people, and found that less he said the safer he was. He snatched a towel m a basket of clothes before a door, twisted it around p. and ran down the street to Mickey's front entrance. ith all his remaining breath he sped up flight after flight stairs and at last reached the locked door, only to find at the key was in the pocket of his stolen trousers, and could not force his way with his bare hands. by get to his clothing by trying the fire-escapes again. was almost too sick to see or cling to the narrow iron be, but that time he counted carefully, and looked until was sure before he entered. He found his clothes, and the intense heat dressed himself, but he could not open door. He sat on the fire-escape to think.

Presently he espied one of the men who had robbed watching him from another escape, and being afraid beaten sore, he crept into the heat, and lay on the bed side the window. After a while a breath of air came in. Junior slept the sleep of exhaustion. When he awok was morning, his head aching, his mouth dry, and then cooler. Glancing toward the door he saw it stand open and then noticed the disorder of the room, an himself, and sat up to find he was on the floor, once i disrobed, and the place stripped of every portable thir it, even the bed, little stove, and the trunk filled clothes and a few personal possessions sacred to Mis because they had been his mother's. The men had the key in Junior's pocket to enter while he slept, dru him, and carried away everything. He crept to the and closed it, then sank on the floor and cried unt

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ain't just the place for me. Mickey, did you ever go pough this? Why do I get it so awful hard?"

It's because the regulars can tell a mile off you are tentry, Junior," said Mickey. "All my life I've been on streets and they knew me for city born, and supposed friends to trace them and back me if they abused me; then, I always look ahead sharp, and don't trust a fing soul about alleys. You say the next escape but I've got to find them, and get back my things. I mut mother's, and Lily and I can't live this winter with bed, and no stove, and nothing at all."

"I'm sorry about your mother's things Mickey, but in't worry over the rest," said Junior. "Pa and Ma in't ever be willing to give up Peaches again, I can see int right now, and if they keep her, they will have to take in too, because of course you can't be separated from her; in goods, I'll pay back. I owe you a lot as it is, but I got in money in the bank, and I'll have to sell my sheep." Junior laid his head on his arm and sobbed weakly.

Don't Junior," said Mickey. "I feel just awful about Let I thought you had a place that would earn your pper, and you had the room, and would be all right." Why of course!" said Junior.

Mickey looked intently at him. "Now look here nior," he said, "I got to square myself on this. I n't think all the time you'd like Multiopolis, when you it with the bark off. Course viewing it on a full mach, from an automobile, with spending money in pocket, and a smooth run to a good home before you,

is one thing; facing up to it, and asking it to han those things to you in return for work you can do without knowing the ropes, is another. You've so out longer than I would, honest you have, but it isn game, and you don't know how, and you'd be a learn. I thought you'd get enough to satisfy you you came, but seeing for yourself seemed to be the way to cure you."

"Oh don't start the 'I told you so," said "Father and mother will hand it out for the rest life. I'd as lief die as go back, but I'm going; not I I can't get in the game, and make a living if you ca if I have to go out and start as you did, with a penny going back, but not for the reason you think. It's I seen at close range, Multiopolis ain't what it looks li an automobile. I know something that I really know

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on't you want to go to Mr. Bruce's office—I got a key and won't care—don't you want to go there and rest a little, and feed up better, before I call your father?"

"No I don't! I got enough and I know it! They must now it some time; it might as well come at once."

"Then let's go out on the car," said Mickey.

"I guess you don't realize just how bad this is," said unior. "You call father, and call him quick and emshatic enough to bring him."

"All right then," said Mickey. "Here goes!"

"And put the call in nearest place you can find and mattle back," said Junior. "I'm done with alleys, and largers, and robbers. Goliath couldn't have held his twn against two big men, when he was fifteen, and I guess ther won't think I'm a coward because they got away with me. But you hurry!"

"Sure! I'll fly, and I'll get him if I can."

*There's no doubt about getting him. This is baked potato, bacon, blackberry roll, honey and bread time at pur house. They wouldn't be away just now, and it's trange they have been so much this week."

Mickey gave Junior a swift glance, and raced to the earest telephone.

"You Mickey?" queried Peter.

"Yes. It's you for S. O. S., and I'm to tell you to time on high, and lose no time in starting."

"Am I to come Mickey, or am I too busy?"

'You are to come, Peter, to my room, and in a hurry.
ings didn't work according to program."

MICHAEL O'HALLORAN

"Why what's the matter, Mickey?"

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"Just what I told you would be when it came to getting a job here; but I didn't figure on street sharks picking on Junior and robbing him, and following him to my room and cleaning out every scrap of his and mine and mother's and slugging him 'til he can't walk. You come Peter, an come in a hurry, and Peter—"

"You better let me start-" said Peter.

"Yes, but Peter, one minute," insisted Mickey. got something to say to you. This didn't work out as planned, and I'm awful sorry, and you'll be too. B Junior is cured done enough to suit you; he won't ev want to leave you again, you can bank on that—and ain't hurt permanent; but if you have got anything your system that sounds even a little bit like 'I told y so,' forget it on the way in, and leave instructions with t

ckey nodded.

lothing to eat for nearly two days?"

other affirmation. Peter arose, pushed back his hat viped the sweat from his brow.

haven't been thinking about anything but him ever he left," he said, "and what makes me the sorest is the longer I think of it, the surer I get that this is my

I didn't raise him right!"

w-w-ah Peter!" protested Mickey.

ve got it all studied out," said Peter, "and I didn't! : have been two mistakes, Junior's and mine, and of vo, mine is twice as big as the boy's."

er stooped and picked up his son, who stirred and ened. When he found himself in his father's arms r clung to him and whispered over and over: "Father, father!" Peter gripped him with all his might and ered back: "Forgive me son! Forgive me!" /ell I don't know what for?" sobbed Junior.

ou will before long," said Peter. He drove to a cool, and let the car stand while he called his wife, and ined all of the situation he saw fit. She was waiting a gate when they came. She never said a word exourge Junior to sit up to the table and eat his supper. Junior had no appetite.

want to run things here for a few minutes," he said. en the children finish, put them to bed, and then he tell you, and you can decide what you'll do to

Tell, don't you worry about that," said Peter.

"No I won't," said Junior, "because there's nothing you can do that will be half I deserve."

When the little folks were asleep, and Mickey had helped Mrs. Harding finish the work, and Jud Jason had been paid five dollars for his contract and had gone home, Junior lay in the hammock on the front porch, while his father, mother and Mickey sat close. When he started to speak Peter said: "Now Junior, wait a minute! You've been gone a week, and during that time I've used my brain more than I ever did in a like period, even when I was courting your Ma, and the subject I laboured on was what took you away from us. I've found out why you were my satisfied, and who made you dissatisfied. The guilty party is Peter Harding, aided and abetted by one Nancy Harding otherwise known as Ma——"

"Why father!" interrupted Junior.

"Silence!" said Peter. "I've just found out that it's man's job to be the head of his family, and I'm going to be the head of mine after this, and like Mickey here, 'In going to keep it.' Let me finish. I've spent this week thinking, and all the things I have thought would make bigger book than the dictionary if they were set down Why should you ask to be forgiven for a desire to go! Multiopolis when I carried you there as a baby, led you a toddler, and went with you every chance I could trum up as a man? Who bought and fed you painted, adulterand candy as a child, when your Ma should have made you pure clean taffy at home from our maple syrup or as good sugar as we could buy? Often I've spent money that not

uld be on interest, for fruit that looked fine to you re, and proved to be grainy, too mellow, sour or not F so good as what you had at home.

I never took you hunting, or fishing, or camping, or ranning, in your life; but I haven't had a mite of trouble find time and money to take you to circuses, which I i't regret, I'll do again; and picture shows, which I'll do ; and other shows. I'm not condemning any form of usement we ever patronized so much, we'll probably do of it again; but what gets me now, is how I ever came to nk that the only interesting things and those worth taking the and spending money on, were running to Multiopolis, at, to laugh, to look, and getting little to show for it but appointment and suffering for all of us. You haven't I the only punishment that's struck the Harding family sweek, Junior. Your Ma and I have had our share, and aven't asked her if she has got enough, but speaking ictly for myself, I have."

'I wouldn't live through it again for the farm," sobbed 8. Harding. "I see what you are getting at Pa, and we who are the guilty parties, just as you say." Junior sat up and stared at them.

'I don't so much regret the things I did," said Peter, I condemn myself for the things I haven't done. I ren't taught you to ride so you don't look a spectacle a horse, and yet horses should come as natural as athing to you. You should be a skilled marksman; I couldn't hit a washtub at ten paces. You should m like a fish, with a hundred lakes in your county;

our door, and if ever any game v if any man has a right to hold up own hills, and swing a strong arm a masterly stroke, it's a land or why plowing and tilling should back, or make a packhorse of a show you how to do the same th work one machine instead of tell for a vacation, just as city me money for books, and music, and with so much land it's a burden quite a bunch of land for sale, make three times the money I e work. We've turned over a ne start to finish, including the hou A year from now you won't know Just now, it's this: I'm pointing

ppy people' when your stomach's cramping and your d splitting!" cried Junior. "I tell you down among m it looks different from riding past in an automobile." 'Exactly!" conceded Peter. "Exactly what I'm comat. All your life I've given you the wrong viewpoint. w you can busy yourselves planning how to make our re of the world over, so it will bring all the joy of right to the front door. I guess the first big thing is currycomb the whole place, and fix it as it should be be most convenient for us. Then we better take a urse of training in making up our minds to be satisfied h what we can afford. Junior, does home look better you than it did this time last week?"

'Father," began Junior, and sobbed aloud.

'The answer is sufficient," said Peter dryly. "Never id son! When, with our heads put together, we our buildings and land fixed right, I suggest that we is fix our clothes and our belongings right. I can't any reason why a woman as lovely as Ma, should be I from any other pretty woman, by her walk or dress. on't know why a man as well set up as I am, shouldn't ir his clothes as easy as the men at the club house. I 't see why we shouldn't be at that same club house for real once in a while, just to keep us satisfied with home king, and that game looks interesting. Next trip to Itiopolis I make, I'm going to get saddles for Junior! Mickey and teach them what I know about how to sit handle a horse properly; and it needn't be a plow se either. Next day off I have, I'm going to spend

among what they are spendit summer to enjoy, let's help out I am going to buy each of us a of tackle, soon as I reach it, wasted sixteen years, now I'm it's going to be a stretch of all home the sweetest, grandest p you help me, Nancy?"

"I think maybe I'll be save can help just a few of these t "Yes, I've sensed that," said that out to me the morning headed for sunup. For years strength has been thrown away plements in your work, and havinconvenient; and I'm the man soot you right tools for your job

nd a stage for our own entertainments, and the folks we ecide to bring here to amuse us. We can put in a picture achine and a screen, that we can pay for by charging a w cents admission the nights we run it, and rent films ice or twice a week from a good city show. We could t up a place like that, and get no end of fun and educaon out of it, without going thirty miles and spending ough money in one night to get better entertainment for month at home, and in a cool, comfortable hall, and here we can go from it to bed in a few minutes. Once am started, with Mickey and Junior to help me, I'm ing to call a meeting and talk these things over with y neighbours, and get them to join in if I can. m't. I'll go on and put up the building and start things I think they should be, and charge enough admittance to t back what I invest; and after that, just enough to pay unning expenses and for the talent we use. I'm so sure it un be done, I'm going to do it. Will you help me, son?" "Yes father, I'd think it was fine to help do that," said "Now may I say what I want to?" mior.

"Why yes, you might son," said Peter, "but to tell the uth I can't see that you have anything to say. If you ave got the idea, Junior, that you have wronged us any, id that it's your job to ask us to forgive you for wanting try the things we started and kept you hankering after I your life so far, why you're mistaken. If I'd trained ou from your cradle to love your home, as I've trained ou to love Multiopolis, you never would have left us. if there is forgiving in the air, you please forgive me.

"But father——" began Jun
"Go to bed son," said Peter.
happened when you ain't as slee
Junior arose and followed his
"Ain't he going to let me tell
all?" he demanded.

"I guess your Pa felt that wh what fools we've been, there wa to say. I know I feel that way. all in its power, from the day the teach them that home is only a sleep, and work, and be sick in; thing in life is to be found somew. most cases, Multiopolis. Just I gobbling up our boys and girls, ar know who have gone, and see Among the men as far as I rem

ou got this week, you'll be in a position to help better than ou could have helped before."

"Yes I guess so too," said Junior emphatically.

He gladly went back to the cream wagon. Peter didn't ant him to, but there was a change in Junior. He as no longer a wilful discontented boy. He was a parter, who was greatly interested in a business and felt distisfied if he were not working at furthering it. He had tale to say, and his eyes were looking far ahead in deep lought. The first morning he started out, while Junior thitched his horse, Peter filled the wagon and went back the barn where Mickey was helping him.

Junior, passing, remembered he had promised Jud Jason bring a bundle he had left there, and stopped for it. He epped into the small front door and bent for the package ing in sight, when clearly and distinctly arose Mickey's sice lifted to reach Peter, at another task.

"Course I meant him to get enough to make him good and sick of it, like we agreed on; but I never intended him get any such a dose as he had."

Junior straightened swiftly, an astonished look crossed s face, and his lower jaw dropped. His father's reply as equally audible.

"Of course I understand that, Mickey."

"Surest thing you know!" said Mickey. "I like Junior. like him better than any other boy I ever knew, and I've town hundreds; and I tell you Peter, he was gamer than bu'll ever believe to hang on as long as he did."

"Yes I think that too," said Peter.

glad to my soul to get him home it sort of gags me to think of his out. It salves my vanity conside that he had the brains to sense the cause he felt it wasn't the work for

Then Mickey's voice came east the cockles of Junior's heart.

"Now lemme tell you Peter; It was that way. It was just th scared out, he'd have gone at it a anything in it he wanted. It w when she first talked it over wit you later: that if he got to the cit earning a living there, he woul wanted; and he did, like all c meant to put it to him stiff; I mancient and honourable third

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Then they laughed. A dull red surged up Junior's neck, and flooded his face. He picked up the bundle, went silently from the barn, and climbed on the wagon. The jerk of the horse stopping at its accustomed place told him when to load the first can. He had been thinking so deeply he was utterly oblivious to everything save the thought that it had been prearranged among them to "cure" him; even his mother knew about, if he heard aright, had been the instigator of the scheme to let him go, to be what Mickey called "initiated in the ancient and honourable third degree of Multiopolis."

Once he felt so outraged he thought of starting the horse home, taking the trolley, going back to Multiopolis and fighting his way to what his father would be compelled to acknowledge success. He knew that he could do it; he was on the point of vowing that he would do it; but in his heart he knew better than any one else how repulsed he was, how he hated it, and against a vision of weary years of fighting, came that other vision of himself planning and working beside his father to change and improve their home life.

"Say Junior are you asleep?" called Jud Jason. "You sit there like you couldn't move. D'ye bring my bundle?"

"Yes, it's back there," answered Junior. "Get it!"

"How'd you like Multiopolis?" asked Jud.

Junior knew he had that to face.

"It's a cold-blooded sell, Jud," he said promptly. "I'm glad I went when I did, and found out for myself. You see it's like this, Jud: I could have stayed and made my way; but I found out in a few days that I wouldn't give a snap

that were going to happen soo bility that Jud gleaned an ic Multiopolis had brought his fi benefit the neighbourhood. A the lines with all the sourness g which was usually sweet, except and the laughter. Suddenly h "Jud, come here," he said.

Jud began to understand and s had known from childhood.

"Could we?" asked Junior.

"'Could we?' Well, I just & "When?" queried Junior.

"This afternoon, if he's going "Well I don't know what his phone from here and by rustlin I've done it on a bet. Where v

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"Hold the horse till I run in and 'phone him."
When he came down the walk he reported: "He walk he reported: "

When he came down the walk he reported: "He wants go fishing awful bad, and he'll be ready by two. That's I settled then. We'll have a fine time."

"Bully!" said Jud laconically, and started to the house another friend, where a few words secured a boy of his e a holiday. Junior drove fast as he dared and hurried th his work; so he reached home a little before two, here he found Mickey with poles and a big can of worms ady. Despite the pressing offer of the car, they walked, order to show Mickey the country which he was eager to plore on foot. Junior said the sunfish were big as lunch ates at Atwater, the perch fine, and often if you caught a asshopper or a cricket for bait, you got a big bass around e shore, and if they had the luck to reach the lake, when ere was no one ahead of them, and secured a boat they are sure of taking some.

"Wouldn't I like to see Lily eating a fish I caught," said ickey, searching the grass and kicking rotting wood as saw Junior doing to find bass bait.

"Minnies are the real thing," explained Junior. "When get the scheme father laid out going, before we start hing, you and I will take a net and come to this creek d catch a bucketful of right bait, and then we'll have an's sport, for sure. Won't it be great?"

"Exactly what the plutes are doing," said Mickey. Gee, Junior, if your Pa does all the things he said he was ing to, you'll be a plute yourself!"

"Never heard him say anything in my life he didn't

"I wonder now!" said Mickey
"Looks like it to me. Fath
you, and they're daffy about Pe
half as much fuss over any of t
"It's because she's so little, at
less," Mickey hastened to explain
"Well for whatever it is, it is,
just as crazy about her as the res
fellow's coming right at us!"

Junior dashed for the fence, w turning to see what "that fellow the ram that had practised on M lowered head, the ram sprang a air, and it butted space and while the boy's breath was fully remore, with all the apility learned s too busy to know exactly what happened, and movents were too quick for Junior. When he saw that ckey was tiring, and the ram was not, he caught a rail m the fence and helped subdue the ram. Panting they nbed the fence and sat resting.

'Why I didn't know Higgins had that ram," said Jun-. "We fellows always crossed that field before. Say, ere ain't much in that

> 'Gentle sheep pray tell me why, In the pleasant fields you lie?'

siness, is there?"

'Not much but the lie," said Mickey earnestly. Junior dropped from the fence and led the way toward wood thick with underbrush, laughing until his heart ned. As they proceeded they heard voices.

'Why that sounds like my bunch," said Junior.

He whistled shrilly, which brought an immediate reonse, so near at hand as to be startling, and soon two ys appeared.

'Hello!" said Junior.

'Hello!" answered they.

'Where're you going?" asked Junior.

'To Atwater Lake, fishing. Where you?"

'There too!" said Junior. "Why great! We'll go toher! Sam, this is Mickey."

Mickey offered his hand and formalities were over.

'But I threw our worms at the ram," said Mickey.

"Well that was a smart trick!" cried Junior.

"Sure!" said Mickey. "Whyou look for them?"

"Oh anywhere under rotting said Jud. "B'lieve it's a good dig in till I cut a stick to help Mickey pushed aside the bus and "dug in." A second later, vover and over striking and scree "Yellow jackets!" shouted J Mickey! He's got too close a n Armed with branches they chim; until Mickey had a fleet red-hot needles piercing him did Presently he found himself besie others "ouched" and grabbed mud and plastered

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are going to smother me, I might as well die from Dites!"

"Bites!" cried the boys and all of them laughed wildly, so wildly that Mickey flushed with shame to think had so little appreciation of the fun calling a sting a bite, when it was explained to him.

"Well they sure do get down to business," he chattered, chilling from the exquisite pain of a dozen yellow-jacket stings, one of which on his left eyelid was rapidly closing that important organ. He bowed a willing head for Jud's application of cold mud.

Finally they gathered up their poles and bait and again started toward the lake. The day was warm, and there was little air in the marsh, and on the swampy shore they followed. Suddenly Jud cried: "I tell you fellows, what's the use of walking all the way round the lake? Bet the boats will be taken when we get there! Let's cut fishing and go swimming right here where there's a cool, shady place. It will be good for you Mickey, it will cool off your stings a lot."

Mickey promptly began to unbutton, and the others did the same. Then they made their way through the swamp tangle lining the shore at the head of the lake, and tried to reach the water beside the tamaracks. Sam and Junior found solid footing, and waded toward deep water. Jud piloted Mickey to a spot he thought sufficiently treacherous, and said: "Looks good here; you go ahead lickey, and I'll come after you."

Mickey was unaccustomed to the water. He waded in

he saw panic in their faces, an probably lost, and they were to gulp of tepid shore water that across his gasping lips made hir gling he threw back his head at branch of a big maple not far about of Mickey went into the cry: branch!" Junior swiftly climble limb, and swayed it till it swept hold; just a few twigs, and then branch lifted, higher and high over hand, and finally grasper stand a gentle pull.

Then Jud began to shout in Junior! Get a better grip befo Maple is brittle! Easy! It wil

Mickey was very quiet now. His small face was pallid ith the terror of leaving Peaches forever with no provim for her safety. The grip of the sucking sand was yet illing at his legs and body; and if the branch broke he ew what it meant; that sucking, insistent pulling, and ving away beneath his feet told him. Suddenly Mickey we up struggling, set his teeth, and began fighting by inact. He moved his shoulders gently, until he let the ter flow in, then instead of trying to work his feet he d them rigid and flattened as he could, and with the per part of his body still rolling, he reached higher, d kept inching up the branch as Junior backed away, d with sickening slowness he at last reached wood thick his wrist. Then he dragged his helpless body after him safety, where he sank in a heap to rest.

"Jud, it's a good thing I went in there first," he said. Teavy as you are, you'd a-been at the bottom by now, there is any bottom."

Mickey's gaze travelled slowly over his lumpy, purple ime, and then he looked closely at the others. "Why em stingers must a-give about all of it to me," he comented. "I don't see any lumps on the rest of you."

"Oh we are used to it," scoffed Jud. "They don't ow on you after you get used to them. 'Sides most all ine are on my head, I kept 'em off with the bushes."

"So did I," chimed in Sam and Junior with one voice.

"I guess I did get a lot the worst of it," conceded ickey. "But if they only stung your heads, it's funny u didn't know where to put your mud!"

"Gosh!" he whispered. "I to spring! I didn't think it was a "You cut out anything more!

Jud nodded. After a while t ing slowly and each one being p good to Mickey. When he h that it was only an accident; he forgot his bites and could talk frequency and danger of quick him, he was amazed that they w the lake shores where there might they said if it had been any of ther instantly, thrown themselves full floated to water where they coul ceived that it had been because he not know what to do, that he wa membering that Junior could not

Jud nodded.

"What?" whispered Junior.

Jud told him.

"Oh that! Nothing in that! Go on!"

So they struck into the path they had followed from the vamp to the woods, and suddenly a warm, yielding, coilg thing slipped under Mickey's feet. With a wild cry: leaped across the body of a big rattlesnake that had sen coiled in the path. As he arose, clear cut against le light launched the ugly head and wide jaws of the attler, and came the sickening buzz of its rattles in mad coil for a second stroke.

"Run Mickey! Jump!" screamed Junior.

"What is it?" asked Mickey bewildered.

"Rattlesnakes! Sure death!" yelled Jud. "Run fool!"
But Mickey stood perfectly still, and looked, not where
the increasing buzz came from, but at them. They had
to choice. Jud carried a heavy club; he threw himself
the front of Mickey and as the second stroke came, he
wung at the snake's head, and then the other boys colcted their senses and beat it to pulp, and the dead mate
watched beside. Junior glared at Jud, but when he
tw how frightened he was, he knew what had happened.
Mickey gazed at the snakes in horror.

"Ain't that a pretty small parcel to deal out sudden eath in?" he asked. "And if they're laying round like eat, ain't we taking an awful risk to be wading through ere, this way? Gee, they're the worst sight I ever saw!" Mickey became violently ill. He lay down for a time,

grazeu you.

"If it did, would it kill me!
"Well after the yellow-jack
being so tired and hot, you
you'd had when we first start
know where it came closest to
"Back of my legs, I s'pose,
"If it had hit you, it would

stuck in, just the width of it anything that looks like it, tha "Here too!" said Mickey.

sands had finished me, I hav They might 'get' her yet. If me, she would be left with no o "Father would," offered Jun let anybody take her. I know

"Well I don't," said Mickey

"Aw-w-ah!" grated Mickey, suddenly tense and alert. He sprang to his feet. So did Junior.

"Say, look here-" cried Mickey.

All right, 'look here,'" retorted Junior. His face amed red, then paled, and his hands gripped, while his we protruded in an ugly scowl. Then slowly and distinctly he quoted: "Course I meant to put it to you stiff; meant to 'niciate you in the ancient and honourable hird degree of the Country all right, so's you'd have tough to last a lifetime; but I only meant to put you up tainst what I'd had myself in the fields and woods; I was set going to test your ginger; I wasn't counting on the ricksand, and the live snake, finding its dead mate Jud teed for you."

"So you were sneaking in the barn this morning, when thought you were gone?" demanded Mickey.

"Easy you!" cautioned Junior. "Going after the andle I promised Jud was not sneaking—"

"So 'twasn't," conceded Mickey, instantly. "So wasn't!"

He looked at Junior a second.

"You heard us, then?" he demanded. "All of it?"

"I don't know," answered Junior. "I heard what I set repeated, and what you said about my being game, and exactly why I came back; thank you for that, even if lick you half to death in a minute—and I heard that my win mother first fixed it up with you, and then father greed. Oh I heard enough—!"

"And so you got a grouch?" commented Mickey.

killed, and set for you this mon "Awful innocent!" scoffed didn't know about the ram eith "Honest I didn't, Mickey," posteering you into the yellow ja degree! Cross my heart, I did Suddenly Mickey whooped. the fence corner and twisted in worn out. Then he struggled u and held out his hand to Junio "If you're willing," he said, "the password will be, 'Brothers

CHAPTER XVIII

MALCOLM AND THE HERMIT THRUSH

'Give me another chance, and this time I'll be the head of my family deed and in truth, and I'll make life go right for all of us." James Mintura.

R. DOVESKY, I want a minute with you," said James Minturn.
"All right, Mr. Minturn, what is it?"

- "You are quite well acquainted with Mrs. Minturn?"
- "Very well indeed!" said Mr. Dovesky. "I have had
- honour of working with her in many concerts."
- "And of her musical ability you are convinced?"
- 'Brilliant is the only word," exclaimed the Professor.
- 'My reason for asking is this," said Mr. Minturn: ne of our boys, the second, Malcolm, is like his mother, I lately we discovered that he has her gift in music. We on it through Miss Leslie Winton, who interested Mrs. nturn in certain wild birds."
- 'Yes I know," cried the Professor eagerly.
- 'When she became certain that she had heard a-I nk she said Song Sparrow, sing Di Provenza from aviata—correct me if I am wrong—until she felt that rdi copied the bird or the bird copied the master, she d my wife, and Nellie was greatly interested."

convince her, for shortly after mer trip she wrote me twice c

James Minturn tried to ke his voice even as he asked casu you about studying bird musi-

"Yes," said the Professor, "ber, came from Boston, where had been made, and she heard the subject more deeply than investigated, and written a bostom the country near Bosto study under his direction. I hit up myself at odd times this s

"That is why I am here," sai you to begin at once, and go as Malcolm with you. The boys of their time in the country that he may be reproducing some of the most woniul of the songs, for all I know, for the birds come ring, calling, searching, even to the very branch which ceals him. Isn't it enough for a beginning?"

Certainly," said the musician.

He's been badly spoiled by women servants," said Mr. aturn, "but the men are taking that out of him as fast t can be eliminated; I think he'll behave himself. I eve he is interested enough to work. I think his ther will be delighted on her return to find him workat what she so enjoys. Does the proposition interest?"

Deeply!" cried the Professor. "Matters musical are remely dull here now, and I can't make my usual trip oad on account of the war; I should be delighted to e up this new subject, which I could make serve me in ny ways with my advanced Conservatory pupils."

'May I make a suggestion?" asked Mr. Minturn.

'Most assuredly," exclaimed the Professor.

'You noticed I began by admitting I didn't know a ng about it, so I'll not be at all offended if you indorse statement. My boys are large, and old for the inning they must make. I have to go carefully to I what they care for and will work at; so that I get m started without making them feel confined and ced, and so conceive a dislike for the study to which hink them best adapted. Would you find the idea going to the country, putting a tuned violin in the ids of the lad, and letting him search for the notes he

a chance to work in what he numbers, and nature study.

"A most delightful one on said Mr. Dovesky. "When sh "Whenever you have selecte the boy to have, call Mr. Tow range with him to come for you, can't start too soon to suit the

"Very well then, I'll make 1 thing in the morning," said the James Minturn went home a

what he had done.

"Won't that be great, Ma
"Maybe you can do the music
man and stand upon a stage bef
make all of them think you're
"I believe I'd like to do it."

out the people who make music

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"Can you prove it, Mr. Tower?" asked Malcolm.

"Yes," said Mr. Tower, "science proves that the water rms developed first. Crickets were singing before the rds, and both before man appeared."

"Then that's what I think," said Malcolm.

"When are they to begin, James?" asked Mrs. Winslow. "Mr. Dovesky is to call Mr. Tower in the morning and Il him what arrangements he has been able to make," aswered Mr. Minturn. "Malcolm, you are old enough to cognize that he is a great man, and it is a big thing for im to leave his Conservatory and his work, and go to the woods to help teach one small boy what the birds say. ou'll be very polite and obey him instantly, will you not?"

"Do I have to mind him just like he was Mr. Tower?"

"I don't think you are obeying Mr. Tower because you just," said Aunt Margaret. "Seems to me I saw you ith your arms around his neck last night, and I think I

ust," said Aunt Margaret. "Seems to me I saw you ith your arms around his neck last night, and I think I ard you tell him that you'd give him all your money, cept for your violin, if he wouldn't go away this winter. onestly, Malcolm, do you obey Mr. Tower because you if forced to?"

"No!" cried Malcolm. "We have dandy times! No ys anywhere have as much fun as we do, and we are trning a lot too! I wonder if Mr. Dovesky will join a campfire?"

"Very probably he'll be eager to when he finds out tout it," said Mrs. Winslow, "and more than likely you'll bey him, just as you do father and Mr. Tower, because bu love to."

know the birds, flowers, and now a component and delight

"Do you have to pay him

"It isn't probable that he v "Gee, it's a pity mother isn bet she knows more about it t

"I bet she does, too," agreed go where we do. There isn't quito bit her she'd have a fit, would scare the birds into fits

"Aw! She would if she war "Well she wouldn't want to!

"Well she might, smarty," once! I saw the boots and s. Don't you wish she liked the parties, father?"

"Yes, I wish she did," said some day she will."

She might!" persisted Malcolm. "She didn't know out this, when she went to the parties. When she mes back I'm going to tell her; and I'm going to take to hear me, and I'll show her the flowers and my h-pond, and yours and father's. Wouldn't it be fun she'd wear the boots again, and make a fish-pond too?" "Yes, she'd wear boots!" scoffed James.

"Well she would if she wanted to," reiterated Malcolm. She wore them when she wanted to hear the birds; if e did once, she would again, if she pleased."

"Well she wouldn't please," laughed James.

"Well she might," said Malcolm stubbornly. "Mightn't Le, father?"

"If she went once, I see no reason why she shouldn't rain," said Mr. Minturn.

"Course she'll go again!" triumphed Malcolm. "I'll ake her, when she comes."

"Yes 'when' she comes!" jeered James. "She won't per live here! She wouldn't think this was good enough Lucette and Gretchen! And she gave away our house the sick children, and she hates it at grandmother's! the doesn't ever come again!"

4 Bet she does!" said Malcolm instantly.

What will you bet?" asked James.

Would you like to have mother come here, Malcolm?" rupted Mr. Minturn quietly.

**Why——" he said and shifted his questioning gaze ward Aunt Margaret, "why—why—well, I'll tell you, ther: if she would wear boots and go see the birds and

"Yes I think it would,"

sively, as he excused himself

"James," said Malcolm, schoolroom, "if Mr. Dovesk the study and won't let us p we do to him to make him sic

"Oh things would turn up! colm, wouldn't you kind o'! mean?"

"Yes, but what would you "I'm not proud of it" reals

"I'm not proud of it," repli "Yes and that's just it!" what comes of living here. A if you are halfway decent the they help you to do things that

who needn't be ashamed (How would you like to go ba iber he would tell us it was not the right way, and try ave us be decent, and Lucette would tell mother, and her would fire him? I wonder how she could! And ie could then, why doesn't she now? I guess she n't want to stop her party to bother with us; but if ever comes and wants to take us back like we were, colm, I'm not going. I like what we got now. I ever going back to be jerked and kicked again. her always said we were to be gentlemen; but we re could be that way. Father and Mr. Tower and Dovesky are gentlemen, just as kind, and easy, and

When we were mean as could be, and had to be led around, and acted like fight-cats, you remember er and Mr. Tower only *held* us; they didn't get mad beat us. If mother comes you may go with her if want to."

wish she'd come with us!" said Malcolm.

Not mother! We ain't her kind of a party."

[know it," admitted Malcolm slowly. "Sometimes int her just awful. I wonder why?"

I guess it's 'cause a boy is born wanting his mother. In ther myself a lot of times, but I wouldn't go with if she'd come to-day, so I don't know why I want but I do sometimes."

I didn't know you did," said Malcolm.

Well I do," said James, "but I ain't ever going. Often ink the queerest things!"

What queer things do you think, James?"

Why like this." said James. "That it ain't safe to

'Member that day?" "Yes I do," said Malcolm

"You know you coaxed he her in!" said James, slowly.

"Yes," said Malcolm.

wasn't mad at her a bit. S me. I wonder why I did it!"

"I guess you did it becaus mal than a decent boy, same a "I think of that, and think forget that I pushed her."

"Pushing her wasn't as ba "I guess ain't either (about Elizabeth again, long a

"Malcolm, we can't get her any way happens that we ev we'll take care of hor like feel

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. Dovesky came. At once they drove to his home for 1, and from there to a music store where a violin was seted for Malcolm.

Mr. Dovesky was so big, the boys stood in awe of his. He was so clean, no boy would want him to see him ty. He was so handsome, it was good to watch his e, because you had to like him when he smiled. He was polite, that you never for a minute forgot that soon I were going to be a man, and if you could be the man I wished, you would be exactly like him. Both boys the very shy of him and very much afraid his entrance their party would spoil their fun.

When they left the music store, Malcolm carefully carng his new violin, Mr. Dovesky his, and a roll of music, boys with anxious hearts awaited developments.

'Now Mr. Tower," said Mr. Dovesky, arranging his d in the carrying case, and handling the violins like sies, "suppose we drive wherever you are likely to find birds you have been practising on, and for a start let hear just what you have done and can do, and then an plan better to work in with you."

The boys looked at each other. That sounded hopeful. ey instantly became a couple of willing and most obligboys, eager to please and to prove that what they had en doing was wise and instructive. When they reached brook they stopped to show the fish pools and then tered an old orchard, long abandoned for fruit growand so worm infested as to make it a bird Paradise. ckoos, jays, robins, bluebirds, thrashers, orioles,

times whistled, sometimes he vocal rendition that would had practised carefully, he we than usual he received replies peeping, peering, calling, and Malcolm's notes. In an hot his breath with interest, su notes himself, and when he fe and heard a bird reply, he was

Then a thing happened th tioned, because they were not A brown thrush, catching t the orchard that morning, s an apple tree and showed that was.

The thrush preened, flirted l widely and sang his first liq commented Mr. Dovesky soft "There he goes from C to E," he commented an instant Ler, "repeats that—C again, falls to B, up to G, repeats at—I wish he would wait till I get my pencil."

"I can give it to you," said Malcolm. "He does each rain over as soon as he sings it. I know his song!"

On the back of an envelope, Mr. Dovesky was sketching staff of music in natural key, setting off measures and ling in notes. As the bird confused him with repetitions - trills on E or C so high he had to watch sharply to atch just what it was, his fingers trembled when he added mes to the staff for the highest notes. For fifteen minutes blessed bird sang, and at each rendition of its full rain, it seemed to grow more intoxicated with its own Finishing the last notes perfectly, the bird eformance. eve a hop, glanced around as if he were saying: "Now any me who thinks he can surpass that, has my permission to y." From a bush a small gray bird meouwed in derision ad accepted the challenge. The watchers could not see im, because he remained in seclusion, but he came so Ose singing the same song that he deceived Mr. Dove-Y, for he said: "He's going to do it over from the bushes "

Exercise Cautioned Malcolm. "Don't you hear the Exercise He starts the same, but he runs higher, he populated proposed p

"Humph!" said Mr. Dovesky. "Why I was so enanced with the first performance I didn't suppose any"Mostly he doesn't till er
"He's pretty sure to again
cat of the bushes, he sings a
His nest isn't where he sings
up so high and make such a
mother would like his notes be
"First," said Mr. Dovesky
Brown Bird sang, and learn in
and when I get his song so I
the instruments, then we'll

"Oh, it goes from high to a bunch, and sweeter tones to

Mr. Dovesky laughed and a that would constitute quite to the brook and lunched an labic calls that could be and

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with estrings corresponded to the lines he had made, ere the notes lay on them, and how to draw them out the bow; and he couldn't explain fast enough to sattree the eager lad. After Mr. Dovesky had gone as far the thought wise, and left off with music, he wandered the Mr. Tower hunting flowers in which he seemed alsest as much interested as the music. Malcolm clung the violin, and over and over ran the natural scale he been taught; and then slowly, softly, with wavering kward bow, he began whistling plain easy calls, and rating up and down the strings for them.

That day was the beginning. Others did not dawn fast Dugh to suit Malcolm, and the ease with which he mased the songs of the orchard and reproduced them, in a w days set him begging to be taken to the swamp to ar the bird that sang "from the book." Leslie Winton is added to the party that day, and Malcolm came from e land of the tamarack obsessed. James, William, and e tutor did not care for that location, but Malcolm and r. Dovesky wanted to erect a tent and take provisions d their instruments and live among the dim coolness. here miracles of song burst on the air at any moment. ney heard and identified the veery. They went on their nees at their first experience with the clear, bell-toned rtes of the wood thrush. With a little practice Malcolm uld reproduce the "song from the book," and he talked it incessantly, sang and whistled it, making patent to ery member of the family that what was in his heart was fully as much a desire to do the notes so literally that he would win the commendation of his mother, as to obtain an answer from an unsuspecting bird; for that was the sport. The big thing for which to strive! They worked to obtain a record so accurately, to reproduce it so perfectly that the bird making it would answer and come at their call. The day Malcolm, hidden in the tamerack swamp, coaxed the sparrow, now flitting widely in feeding its young, he knew not how far, to the bush sheltering him, and with its own notes set it singing against him as a rival, the boy was no happier than Mr. Dovesky.

Mr. Minturn could not quite agree to the camp at the swamp, but he provided a car and a driver and allowed them to go each morning and often to remain late at night to practise owl and nighthawk calls, veery notes, chat cries, and the unsurpassed melody of the evening vespers of the Hermit bird. This song once heard, comprehended.

his father, but it was not paramount. The thing that neemed him most was that Malcolm's interest in what was doing, his joy in the study he was making, had bred deep regard in his heart for his instructor. The boy loved me man intensely in a few days, and immediately began udying him, watching him, copying him. He moved with fit alertness, spoke with care to select the best word, and fast fast becoming punctiliously polite.

On their return Mr. Dovesky had fallen into the habit Flunching with the Minturns. The things of which he and be boy reminded each other, the notes they reproduced by histling, calling, or a combination, the execution of these n the violin, the references Mr. Dovesky made to certain ird songs which recalled to his mind passages in operas. secular and sacred productions, his rendition of the wild usic, and then the human notes, his comparison of the o, and his remarks on different composers, his mastery the violin, and his ability to play long passages precedand following the parts taken from the birds, were inasely absorbing and educative to all of them. Then Mr. ower would add the description and history of each bird question. Mr. Minturn started the boys' library with teresting works on ornithology, everything that had en written concerning strains in bird and human music: te lives and characters of the musicians in whose work be bird passages appeared, or who used melodies so like birds it made the fact apparent the feathered folk had spired them. This led to minute examination of the lives of the composers, in an effort to discover which of them were country born and had worked in haunts where birds night be heard. The differing branches of information opened up seemed endless. The change this work made in the boys appeared to James Minturn and his sister as comething marvellous. That the work was also making a change in the heart of the man himself, was an equal mirricle he did not realize.

As each day new avenues opened, he began to understand dimly how much it would have meant to him in his relations with his wife, if he had begun long ago under ner tuition and learned, at least enough to appreciate the one thing outside society, which she found absorbing. He began to see that if he had listened, and tried, and had induced her to repeat to him parts of the great composers the so loved, on her instruments, when they reached home, he soon could have come to recognize them, and so an even-

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Ford, in his own, it surely would have made some of the ig difference then it was making now. He found himelf brooding, yearning over his sons, and his feeling for hem broadening and deepening. As he daily saw James eeking more and more to be with him, to understand what he was doing, his pride in being able to feel that he had helped if it were no more than to sit in court and hand a narked book at the right moment, he began to make a comade of, and to develop a feeling of dependence on, the boy.

He watched Malcolm with his quicker intellect, his laily evidence of temperament, his rapidly developing nusical ability, and felt the tingle of pride in his lithe uddy beauty, so like his mother, and his talent, so like ers. The boy, under the interest of the music, and with he progress he was making in doing a new, unusual hing, soon began to develop her mannerisms; when he vas most polite, her charm was apparent; when he was effended, her hauteur enveloped him. When he was pleased and happy, her delicate tinge of rose flushed his ransparent cheek, and the lights on his red-brown hair dinted with her colour. He shut himself in his room und worked with his violin until time to start to the :amarack swamp. When Mr. Minturn promptly appeared with the car, he found Malcolm had borrowed Mr. Dovesky's khaki suit and waders for him, and on the advice of the boy he wore the stiff coarse clothing, which the tamaracks would not tear, the mosquitoes could not bite through, and muck and water would not easily penetrate—there were many reasons.

When they reached the swamp both of them put on poots and then, following his son and doing exactly what he was told, James Minturn forgot law, politics, and busness. With anxious heart he prayed that the bird the lad wished to sing would evolve its sweetest notes, and that his high hope of reproducing the music perfectly enoughto induce the singer to answer would be fulfilled. Malcolm advanced softly, slipping under branches, around bushes, over deep moss beds that sank in an ooze of water at the pressure of a step and sprung back on release. every caution, stepping in the boy's tracks, and keeping a few rods behind, followed his father. He had rolled his sleeves to the elbow, left his shirt open at the throat, and for weeks the joy of wind and weather on his bared head had been his, so that as he silently followed his son he made an impressive figure. At a certain point Il go far ahead as I want to be, to start on. Now don't breet to be quiet, and listen hard."

"I won't forget!" said James Minturn.

"Oh but it will be awful if one doesn't sing to-night!"
"Not at all!" answered Mr. Minturn. "This is a new
reperience for me; I'll get the benefit of a sight of the
wamp that will pay for the trip, if I don't even see a bird."

By the boy's sigh of relief the father knew he had quieted us anxiety. Malcolm went softly ahead a few yards, and topped, sheltering himself in a clump of willow and button sushes. His father made himself as inconspicuous as he puld and waited. He studied the trunks of the big scaly rees, the intermingled branches covered with tufts of iny spines, and here and there the green cones nestling pright. The cool water rising around his feet called his ettention to the deep moss bed, silvery green in the evening Here and there on moss mounds at the tree bases se could see the broad leaves and pointed ripening pods hat he thought must be moccasins seeding. Then his eye ought the crouching boy, and he again prayed that he rould not be disappointed; and with his prayer came the inswer. A sweep of wings overhead, a brown flash through he tamaracks, and then a burst of slow, sweet notes, then ilence.

James Minturn leaned forward, his eyes on his son, his recious little lad. How the big strong man hoped, intil it became the very essence of prayer, that he would be granted the pride and pleasure, the triumph, of success; for his ears told him that to reproduce the notes

e had just heard would undoubtedly be the crowning erformance of bird music; surely there could be no other ongster gifted like that! The bird made a short flight and sang again. Across the swamp came a repetition of is notes from another of his kind, and the brown streak loved in that direction. At its next pause its voice arose gain, sweeter for the mellowing distance, and then another bird, not so far away, answered. The bird replied and came winging in sight, this time peering, uttering a nort note, unlike its song; and not until it came searching here he could see it distinctly, did James Minturn awake the realization that the last notes had been Malcolm's lis heart swelled big with prideful possession. What a onderful accomplishment! What a fine boy! How carell he must be to help and to guide him.

Again the bird across the swamp sang and the one in ght turned in that direction. Then began a duet that eart almost stopped, for he began to realize that each mswer to the boy's call was closer than the one before. falcolm would sleep that night with a joyful heart. He vas tolling the bird he imitated; it was coming at his call. of that there could be no question. His last notes came rom a screen of spreading button bushes and northern polly. At the usual interval they heard the reply, but ecognizably closer. Malcolm raised his hand without noving or looking back, but his father saw, and interpreted the gesture to mean that the time had come for im to stop. He took a few steps to conceal himself, for was between trees when the signal came, and paused. ilready so elated he wanted to shout; he scarcely could estrain the impulse. What was the use in going farther? His desire was to race back to Multiopolis at speed limit po tell Mr. Dovesky, Margaret, and Mr. Tower what a triumph he had witnessed. He wanted to talk about it to his men friends and business associates.

Distinctly, through the slowly darkening green, he could see the boy putting all his heart into the song. James Minturn watched so closely he was not mistaken in thinking he could see the lad's figure grow tense as he delivered the notes, and relax when the answer relieved his anxiety as to whether it would come again, and then gather for another trial. At the last call the reply came from such a short distance that Mr. Minturn began intently watching from his shelter to witness the final triumph of seeing the bird Malcolm had called across the swamp, come into view. He could see that the boy was

rowing reckless, for as he delivered the strain, he stepped lmost into the open, watching before him and slowly going ahead. With the answer, there was a discernible movement a few yards away. Mr. Minturn saw the boy start, and gazed at him. With bent body Malcolm stared before im, and then his father heard his amazed, awed cry: Why mother! Is that you, mother?"

"Malcolm! Are you Malcolm?" came the incredulous

James Minturn was stupefied. Distinctly he could set ow. He did not recognize the knee boots, the outing ait of coarse green material, but the beautiful pink face owly paling, the bright waving hair framing it, he knew ery well. Astonishment bound him. Malcolm adanced another step, still half dazed, and cried: "Why, ave I been calling you? I thought it was the bird I saw, till answering!"

"At home. I reserved my suite!" she answered.

"But home's all torn up, and pounding and sick people, and you hate pounding and sick people," he reminded her.

"There wasn't so very much noise, Malcolm," she said, and I've changed about sickness. You have to suffer yourself to do that. Once you learn how dreadful pain is, you feel only pity for those who endure it. Every night when the nurses are resting, I change so no one knows me, and slip into the rooms of the suffering little children who can't sleep, and try to comfort them."

"Mother, who takes care of you?" he questioned.

"A very sensible girl named Susan," she answered.

The boy went a step closer.

"Mother, have you changed about anything besides Eckness?" he asked eagerly.

"Yes Malcolm," said his mother. "I've changed about every single thing in all this world that I ever said, or did, or loved, when you knew me."

"You have?" he cried in amazement. "Would you wear that dress and come to the woods with us now, and do some of the things we like?"

"I'd rather come here with you, and sing these bird notes than anything else I ever did," she answered.

Malcolm advanced another long stride.

"Mother, is Susan a pounding, beating person like Lucette?" he asked anxiously.

"No," she said softly. "Susan likes children. When she's not busy for me, she goes into the music room and plays games, and sings songs to little sick people."

"Because you know," said Malcolm, "James and I talk to over when we are alone, we never let father hear because le loved Elizabeth so, and he's so fine—mother you were nistaken about father not being a gentleman, not even Mr. Dovesky is a finer gentleman than father—and father oved her so; but mother, James and I saw. We believe it had been the cream, it would have made us sick too, and we're so ashamed of what we did; if we had another chance, we'd be as good to a little sister as father is to us. Mother, we wish we had her back so we could try again—"

Nellie Minturn shut her eyes and swayed on her feet, out presently she spoke in a harsh, breathless whisper, yet t carried, even to the ears of the listening man.

"Yes Malcolm, I'd give my life, oh so gladly if I could ring her back and try over—"

"You wouldn't have any person around like Lucette, yould you mother?" he questioned.

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"Then I'll ask father!" cried the boy. "Why I forgot! Father is right back here! Father! Father! Father some quick! Father it wasn't the Hermit bird at all, it was mother! And oh joy, father, joy! She's just changed and changed, till she's most as changed as we are! She'll some back, father, and she'll go to the woods with us, oh the will! Father, you're glad, aren't you?"

When Nellie Minturn saw her husband coming across the mosses, his arms outstretched, his face pain-tortured, she came swiftly forward, and as she reached Malcolm, Mr. Minturn caught both of them in his arms crying: "My sweetheart! My beautiful sweetheart, give me another chance, and this time I'll be the head of my family in deed and in truth, and I'll make life go right for all of us."

CHAPTER XIX

ESTABLISHING PROTECTORATES

"You just bet my world is full of nice men, packed like sardines; but ey'll all scrooge up a little and make room for you on the top layer nong the selects! Come on now! Rustle for your place before we relive and leave you."

Mickey.

"M SORRY no end!" said Mickey. "First time! ever been late. I was helping Peter; we were so busy that the first thing I knew I heard the hum of her liding past the cloverfield, so I was left. I know how hard ou're working. It won't happen again."

Mickey studied his friend closely. He decided the time

Side, in the part that counted most. You've noticed the B barns, sheds and outbuildings, all the modern coneniences for a man, from an electric lantern to a stump fuller; everything I'm telling you—and for the nice lady, ix! Her work table faced a wall covered with brown filcloth, and frying pans heavy enough to sprain Willard, wood fire to boil clothes and bake bread, in this hot reather, the room so low and dark, no ice box, with acres of ice close every winter, no water inside, no furnace, and arrying washtubs to the kitchen for bathing as well as rashing, aw gee—you get the picture?"

"I certainly do," agreed Douglas, "and yet she was a leat, nice-looking little woman."

"Sure!" said Mickey. "If she had to set up houseseeping in Sunrise Alley in one day you could tell her place rom anybody else's. Sure, she's a nice lady! But she has troubles of her own. I guess everybody has."

"Yes, I think they have," assented Douglas. "I could nuster a few right now, myself."

"Yes?" cried Mickey. "That's bad! Let's drop this and cut them out."

"Presently," said Douglas. "My head is so tired it will lo me good to think about something else a few minutes. You were saying Mrs. Harding had trouble; what is it?"

Mickey returned to his subject with a chuckle.

"She was 'bout ready to tackle them nervous prostraions so popular with the Swell Dames," he explained, 'because every morning for fifteen years she'd faced the prown oilcloth and pots and pans, while she'd been wild to watch sunup from under a particular old apple to when she might have seen it every morning if Peterl been on his job enough to saw a window in the right pl Get that?"

"Yes, I get it," conceded Douglas. "Go on!"

"Well I began her work so she started right away, before she got back in comes Peter. When he asks w she was and why she went, I was afraid, but for her I told him. I told him everything I had noticed. first he didn't like it."

"It's a wonder he didn't break your neck."

"Well," said Mickey judicially, "as I size up Peter fight an awful fight if he was fighting, but he ain't i on starting a fight. I worked the separator steady, by and by when I 'summed up the argument,' as a fi of mine says, I guess that cream separator didn't look bigger to Peter set beside a full house and two or the same set as the same and two or the same set as the same set

ed cut that window, and move in the pump, and invest the of those country gas plants, run on a big tank of oline away outside where it's all safe, and a breadter, and a dish-washer, and some lighter cooking things; twe got interned."

'How Mickey?" interestedly inquired Douglas.

'Remember I told you about Junior coming in to hunt rk because he was tired of the country, and how it ned out?" said Mickey.

'Yes I recall perfectly," answered Douglas.

'There's a good one on me about that I haven't told u yet, but I will," said Mickey. "Well when son came ne, wrapped in a comfort, there was a ripping up on the t of Peter. He just 'hurled back the enemy,' and who you think he hit the hardest?"

'I haven't an idea," said Douglas.

"In your shoes, I wouldn't a-had one either," said ckey. "Well, he didn't go for Junior, or his Ma, or me. ter stood Mister Peter Harding out before us, and then ln't leave him a leg to stand on. He proved conclusive d used every spare moment he'd had since Junior was short clothes, carrying him to Multiopolis to amuse him, d feed him treats, and show him shows; so he was to me if Junior developed a big consuming appetite for th things. How does the argument strike you?"

"Sound!" cried Douglas. "Perfectly sound! It's preely what the land owners are doing every day of their es, and then wailing because the cities take their chilen. I've had that studied out for a year past."

MICHAEL O'HALLORAN

"Well Peter figured it right there for us in detail," said Mickey. "Then he tackled Ma Harding and her sunup, and then he thought out a way to furnish entertainment and all the modern comforts right there at home."

"What entertainment?" said Douglas.

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"Well he specified saddles and horses to ride," grinned Mickey, "and swimming, and a fishing-boat and tackle for all of us, a launch on whatever lake we like best, a big entertainment house with a floor for skating and dancing, and a stage for plays we will get up ourselves, and a movie machine. I'm to find out how to run one and teach them, and then he'll rent reels and open it twice a week. The big hole that will cave in on the north side of Multiopolis soon now will be caused by the slump when our neighbourhood withdraws its patronage and begins being entertained by Peter. And you'll see that it will work, too!"

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"Well she was tickled silly, but she didn't lose her head; ne began investigating what had been put on the market meet her requirements. At present we are living on the threshing floor mostly, and the whole house is packed p; when it is unpacked, there'll be a bathroom on the cond floor, and a lavatory on the first. There'll be a trnace in one room of the basement, and a coal bin big nough for a winter's supply. We can hitch on to the colley line for electric lights all over the house, and barn, and outbuildings, and fireless cooker, iron, and vacuum leaner, and a whole bunch of conveniences for Ma, including a washing machine, and stationary tubs in the asement. Gee! Get the picture?"

"I surely do! What else Mickey?" asked Douglas. You know I've a house to furnish soon myself."

"Well a new kitchen on the other end of the building there there's a breeze, and a big clover field, and a wood, and her work table right where it is in line with her rivate and particular sunup. There's a big sink with ot and cold water, and a dish-washer. There's a bread-uixer and a little glass churn, both of which can be teched to the electricity to run. There's a big register om the furnace close the work table for winter, and a as cook stove that has more works than a watch."

"What does the lady say about it?"

"Mighty little!" said Mickey. "She just stands and ipes the shiny places with her apron or handkerchief, and ughs and cries, 'cause she's so glad. It ain't set up yet, ut you can see just standing before it what it's going to

her lines in the winter for to room. The furnace will he we are going to paint it who

"It's a running start," sa Peter will ever get to 'all.' white woodwork, and blue new blue-and-white enamell to finish, with no iron in th saved for frying. Even the and she's crying and laughin blue-and-white wash curtain house is going to have hard more convenient; out goes the place to take off your wraps to the parlour. All the carperare being ground up and wo insurrection! Ma Harding

Ent to see Peter! And Junior! You should see Junior anning his room. And Mickey! You must see Mickey anning his! And Mary and Bobbie! And above all, should see Lily! Last I saw of her, Peter was holded her under her arms, and she was shoving her feet beher trying to lift them up a little. We've most rubbed and off her with fine sand, and then stuck them in cold ater, and then sanded them again, and they're not the same feet—that's a cinch!"

"Is that the sum of the Harding improvements?" asked puglas, drawing fine lines on a sheet of figures before him. "Well it's a fair showing," said Mickey. "We ain't the new rugs, and the music box, and the books; or old furniture rubbed and oiled yet. When the house finished, Peter expressly specified that his lady was to the clothes so she could go to the club house, and not picked for a country woman by what she wore."

"Mickey, this is so interesting it has given my head aite a rest. Maybe now I can see my way clearly. But thing more: how long are you planning to stay there?

"Stay there?" said Mickey. "Didn't you hear me say bere was a horse and saddle and a room for me, and a room It Lily? 'Stay there!' Why for ever and ever more! hat's home! When I got into trouble and called on Peter throw a lifeline, he did it up browner than his job for Ma. line was all I asked; but Peter established a regular Pertecto-the—nobody can 'get' us now—"

"You mean Peter adopted both of you?" cried Douglas.

LILST I THEN A LAIN AND VENU bunch of maple twigs was all 1 going to the bottomless pit quicksand on Atwater Lake day and fed it logs bigger th down like Peter does a pla thought curling a big dead ra ing me so I'd step right on it he didn't figure on the snake mate as big and ugly as it w zipping mad over the warm 1 "Mickey!" gasped Dougl "Just so! Exactly what When I dragged what was and figured out where I'd I spread its branch just as w had hit my leg 'stead of n bearings and saw where I

hurt me worst was that if I

mighty queer. I wasn't so sure that one scratch on leg that looked ugly mightn't a-been the snake striking ough the cloth and dosing me some, I was so sick and lled up; it turned out to be yellow jackets, but it might een snakes, and I was a little upset. As man to man I ed him what I ought to do for my family 'fore I took more risks. A-body would have thought the jolt the gave me would have been enough, but it wasn't! It the snake and the quicksand to just right real wake up. First I was some sore on Junior; but pretty quick whow funny it was, so I got over it——"

He should have had his neck broken!"

Wope! Wope! Back up!" cautioned Mickey. "Nothof the kind! You ain't figuring on the starving, the ting, being knocked senseless, robbed of all his clothes e, and landing in the morgue with the cleaning-house ims. Gee, Junior had reasons for his grouch!"

louglas Bruce suddenly began to laugh wildly.

Umhum! That's what I told you," said Mickey. ell, that night I laid the case before Peter, out on the wagon in the barnyard, so moon white you could have I the Herald, the cattle grunting satisfied all around us, ydids insisting on it emphatic, crickets chirping, and the rooster calling off the night watches same as he did for: first Peter, who denied his Lord. I thought about:, as I sat and watched the big fellow slowly whittling rack, and once in a while putting in a question, and I'd told him all there was to tell, he said this: he sure Lily was mine, and I had a perfect right to keep

it was my right, and my job, say no, 'cause we were not He said there were times w and went to fooling with re and die while it decided wh: a few just exactly such cases ing a fool of itself, as it often things to suit us before it ev "What did he do?" asked "Well, after we'd talked back porch and Peter expla of that family, only she doe him to do exactly what his That's where his na tated. Our Peter said: 'V Peter. course, you remember what little children to come to Hi

to be like Him, so there's no

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"The nice lady she said faster than I can tell you: 'Peter arding, I'm ashamed of you! There's no question of that ad! There's never going to be!'

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"'Well don't get het up about it,' said Peter. 'I knew the time there wasn't, I just wanted to hear you say so in and emphatic. So far as I'm concerned, my way clear as noonday sun,' said Peter. 'Then you go first ng in the morning and adopt them, and adopt them h.' said Ma. 'Lily will make Mary just as good sister as she could ever have,' said she, and then she ched over and put her arms right around me and she d, 'And if you think I'm going to keep on trying to run s house without Mickey, you're mistaken.' I began to cause I had had a big day, and I was shaking on my t anyway. Then Peter said, 'Have you figured it out to end? Is it to be 'til they are of age, or forever?' She t gripped tighter and said fast as words can come, 'I say ke it forever, and share and share alike. I'm willing if u are.' Peter, he said, 'I'm willing. They'll pay their v any place. Forever, and share and share alike, is my a. Do you agree, Mickey?' 'Exactly what do you an?' I asked, and Peter told me it was making me and y both his, just as far as the law could do it; we could go the farther we wanted to ourselves. He said it meant n getting the same for me and Lily as he did for his own, d leaving us the same when he died. I told him he edn't do that, if he'd just keep off the old Orphings' Home vil. that's had me scared stiff all my days. I'd tend to that. now me and Lilv belong to Peter; he's our Pertectorate."

That's the law. I was up but I did have the snake, and that offer, and he was gran love him any more than] minute discovered that it air more than I do Peter: so you that I love him just as well, the finest man you ever knew acquainted, you'll just be tic Club, and to come to his vours. His nice lady is exa Say, she and Peter w older. so, and between us, just as 1 ular lifesaver! If you got a No telling what you might v "Mickey, you do say the r Douglas. "I'd give all I'm right now, and cling for muc

T Lamata

ink you are big enough to serve as a straw for a ng man, Mickey?" inquired Douglas.

re! I'm big enough to establish a *Pertectorate* over his minute. The weight of my body hasn't anyto do with the size of my heart, or how fast I can my brains and feet, if I must."

ckey," said Douglas despairingly, "it's my candid 1 that no one can save me, right now."

key opened his lips, and showed that his brain was g by shutting them abruptly on something that I very much as if it had started to be: "Sure!" that so?" he substituted.

s, I'm in the sweat box," admitted Douglas.

d it's uncomfortable and weakening. What's the ing we must do to get you out?"

nat I'm facing now is the prospect that there's r for me to get out, or for my friends to get me out," ed Douglas. "I wish I had been plowing corn, y."

boy's eyes were gleaming. He was stepping from at to the other as if the floor burned him.

sh, we must saw wood!" he cried. "You go on I me. I been up against a lot of things. Maybe I ink up something. Honest, maybe I can!"

Mickey, there's nothing you or any one can do," ouglas. "A miracle is required now, and miracles eased."

I don't know!" exclaimed Mickey. "Look how been happening to me and Lily right along. I forlornly.

"I'd gladly give you th friend," he said, "but the how to go to work to achie "Is somebody else getting "Not that I know of! isn't the trouble," said Dou "I do wish you'd just 1 "Now that I got the Pertect anything for you. Maybe? I'm an awful schemer! needn't think I'd blab! Cc Suddenly Douglas Bruce's table before him, his head fel sobs shook him. Mickey's a high, and in desperation he t his cap. Then he reached of menced rubbing Douglas un

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Bruce considered the propositions. Then he arose and gan walking the floor.

"Yes," he said. "Yes! 'Bearer of Morning,' call her!" Mickey ran to the telephone. In a minute, "Here she "he announced. "Shall I go?"

"No! Stay right where you are."

"Hello Leslie! Are you all right? I'm sorry to say I n not. I'm up against a proposition I don't know how handle. Why just this: you remember your father old me in your presence that if in the course of my inestigations I reached his office, I was to wait until he got ack? Yes. I thought you'd remember. You know me order of the court gave me access to the records, but e officials whose books I have gone over haven't been eased about it, although reflection would have told them it hadn't been I, it would have been some other man. at the point is this: I'm almost at the finish and I ven't found what obviously exists somewhere. I'm w up to the last office, which is your father's. Ortage either has to be there, or in other departments tside those I was delegated to search; so that further ersuit will be necessary. Two or three times officials have regested to me that I go over your father's records first, an evidence that there was no favouritism; now I have ached them, and this proposition: if I go ahead in his, I have in other offices, I disobey his express order. do not, the gang will set up a howl in to-morrow morng's paper, and they will start an investigation of their vn. Did you get anything from him this morning Les-

i en them to go and Leslie--Yes! Y۱ that I propose to condi I did theirs, and if they business trip, they are are sure that is the thir Yes, I know, but Leslie possible there might be - he have been betrayed all in. I wish you wou from him. We'll see if an ugly situation. to this. Yes I wish yo but— All right then Douglas turned to his

said to Mickey: "Delive Mickey took the enve

time he would have used in the Herald Building.

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inued his talk. A second later he excused himself, and tey followed to the private room.

Well?" he shot at the boy.

Dur subm'rine has sunk our own cotton."

Humph!" said Chaffner. "I've known for two weeks as heading your way. Just what happened?"

ickey explained and produced the letter. Chaffner hed for it. Mickey drew back.

Why I wouldn't dare do just that," he said. "But I v that's what's in it, because I heard what he said, by it you could tell what she said. I've told you y word, and you said the other day you knew; please ne if I should deliver this letter?"

if you want to give me a special with the biggest scoop on years," said Chaffner, "and ruin Douglas Bruce disgrace the Wintons, take it right along."

Aw gee!" wailed Mickey, growing ghastly. "Aw Mr. Chaffner! Why you can't do that! Not to ! Why they're the nicest folks; and 'tain't two weeks I heard Miss Leslie say to Mr. Bruce right in our e, 'losing money I could stand, disgrace would kill

You can't kill her, Mr. Chaffner! Why she's the st, and the prettiest— 'Twas her found me, and me to the boss, like I told you. Honest it was! Why can't! You just can't! Why Mr. Chaffner, I can by your nice eyes you can't! Aw gee, come on now!" ickey's chin hooked over the editor's elbow, his small was against his arm, his eyes were dripping tears, but voice controlled and steady was entreating.

maybe he could make it hour or so. That day, I all he had for his friend, If she'd be willing for the Daddy's' friend, course s Daddy, and she's got a low Daddy has sold the land ought to be enough; and i them. Honest I do!"

"Who, Mickey?" deman "Mr. Minturn! Mr. J: "He's Mr. Bruce's best fri do anything for Miss Lesli you, for if his home ever cause she made it; and sh and he's so crazy happy he Course he'd pay Miss Les He's the nicest man!"

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e room for you on the top layer among the selects! e on now! Rustle for your place before we revolve leave you. All your life you'll be sorry if you make scoop, and kill Miss Leslie, and shame 'darling old dy,' and ruin my boss. Oh I say Mr. Chaffner, you! You can't ever sleep nights again, if you do! haven't ever done anything to you. You'll be the t man of all, if you'll tell me what to do. 'Twon't take but a second, 'cause you know. Oh tell me, for the of God tell me, Mr. Chaffner! You'll be the nicest man ow, if you'll tell me."

ne veteran editor looked down in Mickey's compelling He laid his hand on the lad's brow, just where it the whitest, and said: "That would be worth the price by scoop I ever pulled off, Mickey. Are you going to lawyer or write that poetry for me?"

f I'd ever even thought of law, this would cook me," Mickey. "Poetry it is, as soon as I earn enough to for finding out how to do it right."

And when you find out, will you come on my staff, and directly under me?" asked Mr. Chaffner.

Sure!" promised Mickey. "I'd rather do it than hing else in the world. I've got a life interest in the ld. It would suit me fine. That is, if you're coming nong my nice men—"

r. Chaffner held out his hand. "This is going to cost something in prestige and in cash," he said, "but tey, you make it worth while. Here are your instruction: Don't deliver that letter! Cut for Minturn and

LCS, SAIU IVLICKE and I can't find him? "Then find his wife, "All right! Thank Mickey took the ta in a hurry. He dance and into Mr. Minturn' for he faced Miss Wi paling face told Micl memory as she was on to them and spoke to I "Could I see you a r "Certainly! Step th Mickey showed the be written, and that he of delivering it, and wh

there. Mr. Minturn p Mr. Chaffner. When l is Minturn. What's 1

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"Shall I come back or stay there?" inquired Mickey.

"Come back," said Mr. Minturn. "I may need you." Mickey stood before Mrs. Minturn.

"Please will you speak with Mr. Minturn a minute?"

"Excuse me Leslie," said the lady, rising, and walking side Mickey she entered the room. There she turned him. "I remember you very well," she said, with a eady voice. "You needn't shrink from me. I've done l in my power to atone. It will never be possible for me ren to think of forgiving myself; but you'll forgive me, on't you?"

"Sure! Why lady, I'm awful sorry for you."

"I'm sorry for myself," said she. "What was it you anted, Mr. Minturn?"

"Suppose you tell Mrs. Minturn about both your visits ere," suggested Mr. Minturn to Mickey.

"Sure!" said Mickey. "You see it was like this lady. his morning Mr. Bruce's head is down, and if he doesn't at help before noon, he and Miss Leslie and all those nice cople are in trouble. I thought Mr. Minturn ought to now, so I slipped in and told him."

"What is the trouble, lad?" asked Mrs. Minturn.

"Why you see Miss Leslie's 'darling old Daddy' is one the city officials, and of course Mr. Bruce left him 'til st, because he would a-staked his life he'd find the man was hunting before he got to his office, and he didn't!" "What, James?" said the lady, turning hurriedly.

"Tell her about it, Mickey," said Mr. Minturn calmly.

"Well there ain't much to tell," said Mickey. "My

my poss is all through say if he doesn't begin they will, and he told my ago I was in the Hera whose papers I've solo him what nice friends I Leslie were engaged, as couldn't see why, he to his men, like I'm going get a 'scoop' on the me told me he had a 'scoo coming toward my boss. didn't say sure, but may "Oh James!" cried N "Wait dear! Go on l "Well," said Mickey, this morning when my b go on at once with Mr would: and the people w

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"Chaffner just gave me the figures," he said, holding wer a slip of paper. "If that amount is to Mr. Winton's redit on his account with the city, at the Universal Bank efore noon—nothing at all. If it's not, disgrace for hem, and I started it by putting Bruce on the case. I'll aise as much as I can, but I can't secure enough by that ime without men knowing it. Mr. Winton has unloubtedly gone to try to secure what he needs; but he's poing to be too late. There never has been a worse time to raise money in the history of this country."

"But if money is the trouble," said Mrs. Minturn, "you said you never would touch what I put in your name for rourself, why not use it for him? If that isn't enough, will gladly furnish the remainder. That I'm not a stranded, forsaken woman is due to Leslie Winton; all I have wouldn't be big enough price to pay for you, and my boys, and my precious home. Be quick James!"

Mr. Minturn was calling the Universal Bank.

Mickey and Mrs. Minturn waited anxiously. They involuntarily drew together, and the woman held the boy in a close grip, while her face alternately paled and flushed, and both of them were breathing short.

"I want the cashier!" Mr. Minturn was saying.

"Don't his voice just make you feel like you were on the rock of ages?" whispered Mickey.

Mrs. Minturn smiling nodded.

"Hello, Mr. Freeland. This is Minturn talking— James Minturn. You will remember some securities I deposited with you not long ago? I wish to use a part of them to pay a debt I owe Mr. Winton. Kindly create his account with—oh, he's there in the bank? Well never mind then. I didn't know he was back yet. Let it gold I'll see him in person. And you might tell him that his daughter is at my office. Yes, thank you. No you needn't say anything about that to him; we'll arrange it ourselves. Good-bye!"

"Now where am I at?" demanded Mickey.

"I don't think you know, Mickey," said Mr. Mintum, "and I am sure I don't, but I have a strong suspicion that Mr. Winton will be here in a few minutes, and if his mission has been successful, his face will tell it; and if he's in trouble, that will show; and then we will know what we do. Mr. Bruce would like to know he is here, and at the bank I think."

"I'll go tell him right away," said Mickey.

Douglas Bruce was walking the floor when Mickey entered.

"You delivered the letter?" he cried.

Mickey slowly shook his head and produced it.

"You didn't!" shouted Bruce. "You didn't! Thank God! Oh, thank God you didn't!"

"Aw-w-ah!" protested Mickey.

"Why didn't you?" demanded Douglas.

"Well you see," said Mickey, "me and Mr. Chaffner of the Herald were talking a while ago about some poetry I'm going to write for his first page, soon now—I've always sold his papers you know, and I sort of belong—and I happened to tell him I was working for you, and how fine

ou were, and about your being engaged to Miss Leslie, and he seemed to kind of think you was heading for trouble; he just plain said so. I was so scared I begged him not let that happen, and I told him how everything was, and nally I got him to promise that if you did get into trouble and help you, at least he almost promised. You see he's seen a newspaper man so long, he eats it, and sleeps it, and breathes it all day, and he had a 'scoop'—"

"'He had a scoop'?" repeated Douglas.

"Yes! A great one! Biggest one in ten years!" said the boy. "He loved it so, that me trying to pry him loose om it was about like working to move the Iriquois uilding with a handspike. All he'd promise that first ip was that if I'd come and tell him when I saw you'd not into trouble, he'd see what he could do."

"Wanted to pump you for material for his scoop, I

ppose?" commented Douglas.

"Wope! Wope! Back up!" warned Mickey. "He dn't pump me a little bit, and he didn't try to. He told he nearly three weeks ago just what would happen about the pow, as he had things doped out, and they have. I didn't have that letter should be delivered this morning, 'cause ou had no business in 'darling old Daddy's' office if he had 'stay out.'" In came Mickey's best flourish. "Why mightn't a-been ready!" he exclaimed. "He had his iend to help you remember, I heard Miss Leslie tell you he did. And she told him to. She told you he could have what she had, you remember of course. He might had to use some of his office money real quick, to save

accounting came. was doing this inves guess if he did use tl on that trip he was to something, or do son all right, ain't it?" "Yes, if he could de "Well he can!" t can just as easy, 'cau doing it right now!" "What?" cried Do "Sure!" said Micke fixing things so you What's the matter wi right! Go on and wr anxious, irritated gent basement and cupola make out the reports y

give you time to act in time to be ready for you

ı



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'darling old Daddy' has bad luck, and for staking his oney and his honour on his friend, he's going to get cked clean and dished up himself, why it's fixed so he sn't! See?"

"It's fixed?" marvelled Douglas.

"Surest thing you know!" cried Mickey. "You've and your Pertectorate all safe a long time, and didn't even know it."

"Mickey, talk fast! Tell me! What do you mean?" "Why that was fixed three weeks ago, I tell you," explained Mickey. "When Mr. Chaffner said you would strike trouble, I wasn't surprised any, 'cause I've thought all the time you would; and when you did, I went skinning to him, and he told me not to deliver that letter; and he was grand, just something grand! He told me what had to happen to save you, so I kept the letter, and scuttled for Mr. James Minturn, who started all this, and I just said to him, 'Chickens, home to roost,' or words like that; and he got on the wire with Chaffner, and 'stead of giving that 'scoop' to all Multiopolis and the whole world, he give Mr. Minturn a few figures on a scrap of paper that he showed to his nice lady-gosh you wouldn't ever believe she was a nice lady or could be, but honest, Mr. Bruce, me and her has been holding hands for half an hour while we planned to help you out, and say, she's so nice, she's just peachy-and she's the same woman. I don't know how that happens, but she's the same woman who fired me and the nice lady from Plymouth, and now she ain't the same, and these are the words she said: 'All I have on earth to know---"

"Mickey go on! gave Mr. Minturn se

"Yes," said Mick Minturn showed her

that amount to Mr Bank, so he called t the cashier he found

the cashier he found that minute——"

"'Was there?'" cr.
"'Was there,'" re

backed water, and the tion to Mr. Winton t securities he had then

now that he was home selves. And he told

Miss Leslie was in his c

to her the minute he c all right, it meant tha

good; and if he was he



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"Well young man, can you?" inquired a voice behind them.

With the same impulse Douglas and Mickey turned to find Mr. Winton and Leslie standing far enough inside the door to have heard all that had been said, and obviously keeping quiet to hear it. A slow red crept over Mickey's fair face. Douglas sprang to his feet, his hand outtretched and words of welcome on his lips. Mr. Winton but him aside with a gesture.

"I asked this youngster a question," he said, "and I'm leeply interested in the answer. Can you?"

Mickey stepped forward and took one long, straight ook into the face of the man before him, and then his exultant laugh trilled as the notes of Peter's old bobolink bird on the meadow fence.

"Surest thing you know!" he cried in ringing joy. "You're tired, and you need washing, and sleep, and a long rest, but there isn't anything sneaking in your eye! There isn't any glisteny, green look on your face. It's been with you, just like I told Mr. Chaffner it's in the Bible; only with you, it's been even more than a man 'laying down his life for his friend,' it was a near squeak, but you made it! Gee, you made it! I should say I could tell!"

Mr. Winton caught Mickey, and lifted him from his feet. "God made a jewel after my heart when he made you lad," he said. "If you haven't got a father, I'm an insistent candidate for the place."

"Gee, you're the nicest man!" said Mickey. "If I was

out with a telescope searching for a father, I'd make a home run for you; but you see I'm fairly well fixed. Here's my boss, too fine to talk about, that I work for to earn money to keep me and my family; there's Peter, better than gold, who's annexed both me and my child; there's Mr. Chaffner punching me up every time I see him about my job for him, soon as I finish school; I'd like you for a father, only I'm crazy about Peter. Just you come and see Peter, and you'll understand—"

"I'll be there soon," said Mr. Winton. "I have reasons for wanting to know him thoroughly. And by the way, how do you do, Douglas? How is the great investigation coming on? 'Fine!' I'm glad to hear it. Push it with all your might, and finish up so we can have a month on Atwater without coming back and forth. I feel as if I'd need about that much swimming to make me clean, as the young man here suggests; travelling over the west in midsummer is neither cool nor cleanly; but it's great, when things sell as ours did. Land seems to be moving, and there's money under the surface; nobody has lost so much, they are only economizing; we must do that ourselves, but Swain and I are both safe, so we shall enjoy a few years of work to recoup some pretty heavy losses; we're not worth what we were, but we are even, with a home base, the love of God big in our hearts, and doubly all right, since if we couldn't have righted ourselves, our friends would have saved us, thanks to this little live wire on my left!"

"Oh Daddy, if you'd searched forever, you couldn't

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have found a better name for Mickey!" cried Leslie. "Come on Douglas let's go home and rest."

"Just as soon as I write and start Mickey with a note,"

said Douglas. "Go ahead, I'll be down soon."

He turned to his desk, wrote a few lines, and sealing

them, handed the envelope to the waiting boy.

"City Hall," he said. "And Mickey, I see the whole thing. It will take some time to figure just what I do owe you—"

"Aw-a-ah g'wan!" broke in Mickey, backing away.

"Mickey, we'll drive you to take the note, and then you come with us," said Douglas.

"Thanks, but it would try my nerve," said Mickey, and I must help Peter move in the pump!"

CHAPTER XX

MICKEY'S MIRACLE

"I'm dead against bunching children in squads. If rich folks ments do something worth while with their money, they can do it by each family taking as many orphings as they can afford, and raising them personal See?"

Mickey.

HAT night Mickey's voice, shrill in exuberant rejoicing, preceded him down the highway, and the Hardings, all busy working out their new plans for comfort, understood that something unusually joyous had happened. Peaches sat straighter in her big pillow-piled chair, leaned forward, and smilingly waited.

"Ain't he happy soundin'?" she said to Mrs. Harding, who sat near her sewing. "I guess he has thought out the best po'try piece yet. Mebby this time it will be good enough for the first page of the Herald."

"Young as he is, that's not likely," said the literal woman. "There's no manner of doubt in my mind but that he can do great newspaper work when he finishes his education and makes his start; but I think Mr. Bruce will use all his influence to turn him toward law."

"Mr. Douglas Bruce is a swell gentl'man," said Peaches, and me and Mickey just loves him for his niceness

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us; but we got that all settled. Mickey is going to write po'try piece for the first page of the Herald—that's our aper—and then we are going to make all my pieces into bu'ful book, like I got it started here."

Peaches picked up a small notebook, scrupulously kept, and lovingly glanced over the pages, on each of which she had induced Mickey to write in his plainest script one Section of her nightly doggerel; and if he failed from the intense affairs of the day, she left a blank page for him to fill later. Taken together, the remainder of her possessions were as nothing to Peaches compared with that book. Not an hour of the day passed that it was not in her fingers, every line of it she knew by heart, and she learned more from it than all Mickey's other educational efforts. Peter scraped a piece of fine black walnut furniture free from the accumulated varnish of years, and ran an approving hand over the smooth dark surface, seasoned with long use. He smiled at her, and she smiled back and fell into a little chant that had been on her lips much of the time of late: "You know, Peter! You know, Peter! We know somepin' we won't tell!"

Peter nodded and beamed on her.

"Just listen to that boy, Peter, he must be perfectly possessed!" said Nancy.

"He didn't ever sound so glad before!" cried the child, eagerly.

Mickey came up the walk radiant. He divided a smile between Mrs. Harding and Peter, and bowed low before Peaches as he laid a package at her feet. MICHAEL O'HALLORAN

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Then he struck an attitude of exaggerated obeisance and recited:

"Days like this I'm tickled silly,
When I see my August Lily.
No other fellow, dude or gawk,
Owns a flower that can laugh and talk."

Peaches immediately laughed, and so did all of them. "Peter," asked Mickey, "were you ever so glad the you thought you would bust wide open?"

"I was," said Peter, "and I am this minute."
"Would you mind specifying circumstances?"

"Not a bit," said Peter. "First time was when said she'd marry me, and I got my betrothal kiss; second, was the day she said she'd forgive my year selfish dunderheadedness, and start over. Now y Mickey, what's yours?"

"The great investigation is over, so far as our comission goes," answered Mickey. "Multiopolis is robbed where she was sure she was. Her accounts ance in the departments we've gone over. Nobody the slick face, the glass eye, the lawn mower on his conut, or dons the candy suit from our work; but some for I love had a near squeak, and I got a month vacat. Think of that, Miss Lily Peaches O'Halloran! Gee, get things fixed up here and have a party, to show neighbouring gentlemen what's coming to them, be the weather gets so cold they won't have time to for their jobs this fall. Some of them will squirm, but don't care. Some of them will think they won't do it,

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y will. Kiss me, Lily! Hug me tight, and let me go on the furnace foundation 'til I sweat this out of

When the children were sleeping that night he sat on veranda and told Mrs. Harding and Peter exactly what thought wise to repeat of the day's experience and no te; so that when he finished, all they knew was that the estigation was over, so far as Mr. Bruce was concerned, they had a vacation, and was a happy boy.

is she came to dinner the next day, Mary laid a bundle mail beside her father's plate, and when he saw it, er, as was his custom, reached for the *Herald* to read the headlines. He opened the paper, gave it a shake, red at it in amazement, scanned a few lines and muted: "Well for the Lord's sake!"

Then he glanced over the sheets at Mickey and back in. The family arose and hurried to a point of vane at Peter's shoulder, while he spread the paper wide held it high so that all of them could see. Enclosed a small ruled space they read:

Sacred to the memory of the biggest scoop,
That ever fell in Mister Chaffner's soup,
And was pitched by this nicest editor-man,
Where it belonged, in the garbage can,
To please his friend, Michael O'Halloran.
Whoop fellers, whoop, for the drownded scoop,
That departed this life in our Editor's soup!
All together boys, Scoop! Soup! Whoop!

They rushed at Mickey and shook hands, thumped, patted and praised him, when a half wail arose to be point of reaching his consciousness.

"Mickey, what?" cried Peaches.

"Let me take it just a minute, Peter," said Mickey, reaching for the sheet.

"Wait a second," suggested Mrs. Harding, picking ap a big roll that they had knocked to the floor. "The doesn't look like catalogues, and it's addressed to you Likely they've sent you some of your own."

"Now maybe Mr. Chaffner did," said Mickey, almost at the bursting point. "Course he is awful busy, the busiest man in the world, I expect, but he might have sent me a copy of my poetry, since he used it."

With shaking fingers he opened the roll, and there were several copies of the *Herald* similar to the one Peter holl, and on the top of one was scrawled in pencil: "You place, your desk, and your salary are ready whenever you want to begin work. You can't come too soon to suit me.—Chaffner."

Mickey read it aloud.

"Gee!" he said. "I'most wish I had education enough to begin right now. I'd like it! I could just go crant about that job! Yes honey! Yes, I'm coming!"

He caught up another paper, and hurried across the room, quietly but decidedly closing the door behind him, and when Mary started to follow, Junior interposed.

"Better not, Molly," he said. "Mickey wants to be alone with his family for a few minutes. Say father

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"t there a good many newspaper men worked all their es, and got no such show as that?"

"I haven't a doubt of it," said Peter.

"Mickey must have written that, and sent it in before came home yesterday," said Mrs. Harding. "I call pretty bright! I bet if the truth was told, something ent wrong, and he was at the bottom of shutting it up. on't you call that pretty bright, Pa?"

"I guess I'm no fair judge," said Peter. "I'm that ejudiced in his favour that when he said, 'See the cat gotiate the rat' out in the barn, I thought it was part."

"Yes, and it was," commented Junior. "It's been any for everybody to 'negotiate' all sorts of things ever ace that north pole business, and it was funny for the too. Father, do you think that note really means at Mr. Chaffner would give Mickey a place on his paper, d pay him right now?"

"I don't know why Chaffner would write it out and in his name to it if he didn't mean it," said Peter.

"You know he is full of stuff like that," said Junior. It could do some every day about people other than aches if he wanted to. Father, ain't you glad he's in r family? Are you going to tell him to take that job he asks you?"

"No I ain't," said Peter. "He's too young, and not e book learning to do himself justice, and that place is grown up and exciting for a boy of his nerve force. on't you think, Nancy?" "Yes, I do, but you needn't worry," said Mrs. Hand "Mickey knows that himself. Didn't you hear him soon as he read it, that he hadn't the education yet? taken care of himself too long to spoil his life now, he will see it; but I marvel at Chaffner. He ough have known better. And among us, I wonder at Mi Where did he get it from?"

"Easy!" said Peter. "From a God-fearing, intell mother, and an irresponsible Irish father, from in ingrained sense of right, and a hand-to-hand scuffle life in Multiopolis gutters. Mickey is all right, and to God, he's ours! If he does show signs of wanting to the Herald office, discourage him all you can, I wouldn't be good for him—yet."

"No it wouldn't; but it would be because he solid study and school routine to settle him, and him great instead of a clown, as that would at hi But if you think there is anything in the Herald office could hurt Mickey, you got another think comin wouldn't hurt Mickey; and it would be mighty good trest of them. The Herald has more honour and consthan most; some of the papers are just disgrace what they publish, and then take back next day; and are forced to endure it. Sit up and eat your dinner I want to get on with my work."

"Mickey, what happened?" begged Peaches as N came in sight, carrying the papers.

He was trembling and tensely excited and her eyes could see it. They rested probingly a seco

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arkened. She stretched out her hand.

ickey, let me see!" she commanded.

key knelt beside her and spread out the sheet. he took her hand and set a finger on the first letter name and slowly moved along as she repeated the s she knew best of all, and softly pronounced the

She knew the *Herald* too, and she sat so straight by was afraid she would sprain her back, and lifted ead "like a queen," if a queen lifts her head just as as her neck can possibly stretch, and smiled a cold smile of supreme self-satisfaction.

ow Mickey, go on and read what you wrote about her Highness commanded.

e collapse of Mickey was sudden and complete. He lat Peaches, at the paper, opened his lips, thought nd discarded it, shut his lips to pen the lie in for sure, umbly and contritely waited, a silent candidate for Peaches had none. To her this was the logical me of what she had been led to expect. There was aper. The paper was the Herald. There was the page. There was Mickey's name. She had no conn of Mickey writing a line which did not concern also he had expressly stated that all of them and the book were to be about her. She indicated the paper is name, and the condescension of her waiting began touched with impatience.

ickey, why don't you go on and read what it says me?" she demanded.

Mickey saw plainly what must be done, and he sorry to disappoint her. He gazed at her and sudden for the first time, a wave of something new and under rushed through him. This exquisitely delicate beautiful little Highness, sitting so proudly straight, so uncompromisingly demanding that he redeem promises, made a double appeal to Mickey. Her H ness scared him until he was cold inside. He was afr and he knew it. He wanted to run, and he knew it: no band of steel could have held him as this bit of w femininity, beginning to glow a soft pink from sle enriching blood, now held and forever would hold and best of all he knew that. It was in his hear be a gentleman; there was nothing left save to be now. He took both Peaches' hands, and began paring her gently as was in his power for what ha come.

"Yes, Flowersy-girl," he said, "I'll read it to you, you won't understand 'til I tell you—"

"I always understand," she said sweepingly.

"You know how wild like I came home last night, plained Mickey. "Well, I had reason. Some folks have been good to us, and that I love like we love I and Ma, had been in awful danger of something that we make them sore all their lives, and maybe I had little part in putting it over, so it never touched to anyway, they thought so, and I was tickled past all and reason about it. It was up to the editor of Herald to decide; and what he did, was what I begget

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Course left to himself, he would a-done it anyway, ter he had time to think——"

"Mickey, read my po'try piece about me, an' then talk,"
rged Peaches.

"Honey, you make me so sick I can't tell you."

"Mickey, what's the matter?"

Peaches' eyes were penetrating and slowly changing accusing. She drew a deep breath and gave him his est cold, unrelenting look.

"Mister Michael O'Halloran," she said in incisive tones, did you write a po'try piece for the first page of the "erald, not about me?"

"Well Miss Chicken," he cried, "I wish you wouldn't alk so much! I wish you'd let me tell you."

"I guess you ain't got anything to tell," said Peaches, Iding her arms and tilting her chin so high Mickey ared she might topple backward.

"I guess I have!" shouted Mickey. "I didn't put nat there! I didn't mean it to be there! If I'd a-put it nere, and meant it there, and knowed it would be there, would a-been about you, of course! Answer me this, liss. Any single time did I ever not do anything that I nid I would?"

"Nothing but this," admitted Peaches.

"There you go again!" said Mickey. "I tell you I idn't do this, and when I tell you, I tell true, Miss, get hat in your system. If you'd let me explain how it was, ou'd see that I didn't have a single thing to do with it." Peaches accomplished a shrug that was wonderful,

pe there. Honest, I don t! "Go on an' read it!" she Mickey obeyed. As he fi she faced him in wonder.

"Why they ain't a damn "Course there ain't!" agi would be no sense to anythin

"Then what did you put.

"I didn't! I'm trying to Peaches shed one degree "Well why don't you go

tioned. "Aw-w-ah! Well if you

monoplane! I've tried to t If you stop me again, I'm go and stay 'til you bawl your

"If you go, I'll call Junior "Well go on and call him He turned, his heart thro repressed tears, and the big

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ed a bit of linen, and mopped Mickey's eyes and face then her own. While still clinging to him she spered: "Mickey, I'm jus' about dead to have it be Herald, an' the front page, an' you, an' not about me!" Flowersy-girl, I'm just as sorry as you are," said ckey. "It was this way: I was just crazy over things editor-man did, that saved our dear boss and the ely Moonshine Lady who gave you your Precious ld and her 'darling old Daddy' from such awful uble it would just a-killed them; honest it would Lily! en our editor-man was so great and nice, and did what didn't want to at all, I went sort of wild like, and when as off for the day and got on the streets, everything led me his way. I was anxious just to see him again, if I'd done what I wanted to, I'd a-gone in the Herald ce and knelt down, and said: 'Thank you, oh thank I' and kissed his feet, but of course I knew men n't do like that, and it would have shamed him, but ad to do something or bust, and I went running for the ce like flying, and my mind got whirling around, and t stuff began to come.

I slipped in and back to his desk, like I may if I want and there he sat. He had a big white sheet just like s before it is printed, spread out, and a pencil in his gers, and about a dozen of his best men were crowding and with what they had for the paper to-day. I've I you how they do it, often, and when I edged up ne of the men saw me. They knew I had a pass to a, so they stepped back just as he said: 'Well boys,

wno scoopea our scoop, rigi him fill the space he's cut i joke, but I wasn't going t swellest smarties who work I've kidded back with my ; I stepped back and shot i there, and when I got to t' to 'Whoop,' Lily, you coulthey was starting for me, you something awful, bos between, and cut for life: 'c a-been there yet. They a but they get a little key like me couldn't manage is to it, Lily, honest, cross: would put it there. I did: good enough. I wouldn't : if I'd known they was going "You jus' said it once. M

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wists and curls, but one means a whole sentence—they all it 'shorthand'—and doing that way, they can set own talk as fast as anybody can speak, and there were a ozen of them there with pencils and paper in their fingers. hat wasn't anything for them!"

"Mickey, are you going to learn to write that way?"

"Sure!" said Mickey. "Before I go to the Herald to ake my desk, and my 'signment,' I've got to know, and ou ought to know too; 'cause I always have to bring what I write to you first, to see if you like it."

"Yes, if the mean old things don't go an' steal my place

again, when you don't know it," protested Peaches.

"Well, don't you fret about that," said Mickey. "They got away with me this time, but they won't ever again, cause I'll be on to their tricks. See? Now say you forgive me, and eat your dinner, 'cause it will be spoiled, and you must have a good rest, for there's going to be something lovely afterward. You ain't mad at me any more, Lily?"

"No, I ain't mad at you, but I'm just so-"

"Wope, wope!" cried Mickey softly applying the palm of his hand.

Peaches pulled it away indignantly.

"-so-so-so estremely mad at those paper men! Mickey, I don't think I'll ever let you be a Herald man at all if they're going to leave me out like that!"

"What do you care about an old paper sold on the streets, and ground up for buckets, and used to start fires, shall have all about me in the shelf; so there, you need thing else, 'cause I shan't ev "Course you shan't!" age.

"Course you shan't!" agr He went back to the din finished and gone. He carri to the back porch, and eat get things in place. As alw for orders. She was a litt mother in size, colouring, spe could almost forget she was 1 she made him feel her mot habit it was natural with h what he could to assist her l else. All the help Peter had no more to do for Mrs. F dishes while she sat sewing for he said to her: "When you I wish you'd make her just :

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ime, and I kept making every excuse I could think up to eep them away."

"But why, Mickey?" asked Mrs. Harding, looking at im intently. She paused in her sewing and ran the

needle slowly across the curtain material.

"Well, for a lot of reasons," said Mickey. "A fellow of my size doesn't often tackle a family, and when he does, if he's going to be square about it, he has got to do a lot of thinking. One thing was that it's hard for me to get Lily out of my head like I first saw her. I guess I couldn't tell you so you'd get a fair idea of how dark, dirty, alone, and little, and miserable she was. Just with all my heart I was ashamed of her folks, and sick sorry for her; but I can't bear for anybody else to be! I didn't want any of them to see her 'til she was fed, and fatted up a lot, and trained 'til how nice she really is shows plain. It just hurt me to think of it."

"Um-m-uh!" agreed Mrs. Harding, differing emotions

showing on her face. "I see, Mickey."

"Then," continued Mickey, "I'm sticking sore and mean on one point. I did find her! She is mine! I am going to keep her! Nobody in all this world takes her, nor God in Heaven!"

"Mickey, be careful what you say," she cautioned.

"I don't mean anything wicked," explained Mickey.
"I'm just telling you that nobody on earth can have her,
and I'd fight 'til I'd die with her, before even Heaven gets
her. I don't mean anything ugly about it. I'm just
telling you friendly like, how I feel about her."

like to got caught in a ci Sunshine Nurse helped me ing how much women were ing in a lot on Lily just to: precious to experiment with "That Home business h: you-any-minute devil,' pee ever since mother went. I but I couldn't take any ri. Homes ain't no place for building them, and pennin home and love in them, people who pay the money in their own homes and lov every family in the world t two, and them that has Orphings' Homes would ma and the orphings would Course I know all folks air

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what they would do, I didn't want them pestering and, maybe to ruin everything; and when I did, I have a would be to take her themselves, and in one day they all a-made all I could do look like thirty cents. She mine, and what she had with me was so much better an what she would a-had without me, or if the law got her, at I thought she was doing well enough. I see now she had a-had more; but I thought then it was all right!"

"Now Mickey, don't begin that," said Mrs. Harding. What you did was to find her, and without a doubt, save life; at least if you didn't, you landed her in a fairly ecent home where all of us will help you do what you wink best for her; and there's small question but we n beat any Orphans' Home yet in existence. And as For the condition in which I found her, it was growing parm in that room, but I'll face any court in the universe and swear I never saw a cleaner child, or one in better condition for what you had to begin on. The Almighty Himself couldn't have covered those awful bones with sesh and muscle, and smoothed the bed sores and scars From that little body; and gone much faster training her right, unless He was going back to miracles again. As far as miracles are concerned, I think from what you tell me, and what the child's condition proves, that you have sperformed the miracle yourself. To the day of my death "Il honour, respect, and love you, Mickey, for the way n which you've done it. I've yet to see a woman who sould have done better, and I want you to know it."

now, fully as much as you do Mickey polished the plat. Then he spoke again: "The just itching to owe you."

"Tell me about it, Mickey
"Well right in line with v
Mickey. "Just suppose a l
this afternoon, like I have
nice folks so polite and beau
I know you are busy, but I'l
if you and Peter will dust t
upset fix we are in; but just
keep right on the job without
are gone. See?"

"You mean you don't wan
"You get me!" cried Mi
I don't want to be left alon
ideas in Lily's head about

now. She'd make the worst spoiled kid you ever she had half a chance. What she needs to make id woman of her, like you and mother, is clean air, good food like she's got here, with bone as well as e in it; and just enough lessons and child play with en to keep her brains going as fast as her body, and y pampering to make her foolish and disagreeable. Whow little and sick she is, but she shan't use it for I to spoil her whole life. See?"

Through a glass darkly," quoted Mrs. Harding ng. "Oh Mickey, I didn't think it of you. You're than the well."

nat's all right," said Mickey, his face flushing. n I hear you say 'let good enough alone.' My sentiexact. Lily is fine, and so am I. Let us alone! and Peter will do me the 'cap-sheaf' favour, as uld say, you'll dust up and spunk up, and the very int that comes-'cause it's coming-at the very int of how Miss Leslie would love to take care of ear little darling awhile, smash down with the nix! like sixty! Keep your eyes and ears open, and if ould, dearest lady, beat them to it, I'd be tickled you manage that. If you could only tell them how I she has to be handled, and taken care of, and how ers and many around would be bad for her-" ickey, the minute they see the shape things are in t will give them the chance they are after, and they egin that very thing," she said.

know it," conceded Mickey. "That's why I'd

that, and I know Peter diding you and Peter would have and engineer this visit that you see they are going to of Lily, and to take me, and born to do; if you'd only I your wires warn you what and beforehand, calm and wouldn't even be needed; c Harding, do you see?"

"That I do!" said Mrs. go and speak to Peter at or men back, and quiet them on a fresh dress, and put so fix Peaches right away, if s

Mrs. Harding's voice t would do as she hastened to heart, helped all he could, ore a noticeable air of expectation. All the family clean and purposely keeping so; but the waiting was and work was piled high in any direction. Peaches d the return to normal conditions by calling for her and beginning to copy her lesson. Mary with many ses not to scatter her scraps, sat beside the couch ut bright pictures from the papers. Mickey grew is and began breaking up the remains of packing cases, Junior went after the wheelbarrow. Mrs. Harding ht out her sewing, and Peter went back to scraping walnut furniture. Mickey passed him on an errand kitchen and asked anxiously: "Did she tell you?" es," said Peter.

ill you make it a plain case of 'nobody home! nohome?"" questioned Mickey.

will!" said Peter emphatically.

ing busy, the big car ran to the gate before they saw ning, and Leslie Winton and Douglas Bruce came up alk together, while Mr. Winton and Mrs. Minturn d in the car, in accordance with a suggestion from las that the little sick girl must not see too many ge people at once. Mickey went to meet them, and les watching, half in fear and wholly in pride, saw las Bruce shake his hand until she frowned lest it clap him on the back, and cry: "Oh but I'm proud i! Say that was great!"

lie purposely dressed to emphasize her beauty, slipped m across his shoulders and drawing him to her

his brow.

An abrupt movement from made Mrs. Harding glance first wave of deep colour the white face, come creeping ther cheeks, even her foreheads and primer, and thrust it used Mrs. Harding watching her her lips in scorn: "'Our!" Wonder whose her!"

Mrs. Harding, caught press a laugh as she turned noticed this. He made thrust Peaches' Precious in a whisper: "You be care

Peaches needed the rem she had been drilled so o



Nothing more was necessary. Leslie was captivated and would scarcely make way for Douglas to offer his greeting. Mary ran to call her father, and the visitors seated themselves and tried to say the customary polite things; but each of them watched a tiny white-clad creature, with pink ribbons to match the colour in a flawless little face. rounded to the point of delicate beauty, overshadowed y a shower of gold curls, having red lips and lighted by a pair of big, blue-gray eyes with long dark lashes. When Mrs. Harding saw both visitors look so intently at Peaches, and intercepted their glance of admiration toward each ther, she looked again herself, and then once more. She 12d not realized that the child had "fleshed up" so, and he surge of red colouring her face and lips, the light of excitement in her eyes, added to this an indefinable somehing which that instant explained itself.

Peaches spoke with elaborate imperiousness.

"Mickey-lovest, come here and bend down your head."

Mickey slipped behind Douglas' chair, knelt on one knee, and leaned to see or hear what Peaches desired of him. She drew her handkerchief from her waist ribbon, rubbed it across his forehead, looked at the spot with frowning intentness, rubbed again, and then dropping the handkerchief, laid a hand on each side of his head, bent it to her and kissed the spot fervently; then she looked him in the eyes and said with solicitous but engaging sweetness: "Mickey, I do wish you would be more careful what you get on your face!"

Mickey drew back thrilled with delight, but extremely

"We are doing our level b

ern home for all of us, and to bours," she said quietly. well as we were, but latel have things much more con us two more dear children, and comforts and applianc new daughter right. When led to another until we at we've saved the best place over."

"Yes we are on the finish
"I did think of taking her:
tinued Mrs. Harding, "but
meeting people, and Mickey a
strangers and changing beds
her than the annoyance of re
very much to see the work

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ultiopolis," said Mickey. "She's all right, getting ronger every day."

Peaches spread both hands and looked at them criteally, back and palm.

"They are better," she said. "You ought to seen them hen they was so clawy they made Mickey shiver if I uched him; and first time I wanted to kiss something go like granny did, he wouldn't let me 'til I cried, an' hen he made me put it on his forehead long time, 'til I to to to the bones didn't scratch him; didn't you Mickey?"

"Well I wish you wouldn't tell everything!"

"Then I won't," said Peaches, "'cause I'm your fam'ly, n' I must do what you say; an' you are my fam'ly, an' you must do what I say. Are you a fam'ly?" she questioned Leslie and Douglas.

"We hope to be soon," laughed Leslie.

"Then," said Peaches, "you can look how we're fixing our house so you can make yours nice as this. Mickey, want to show that pretty lady in the auto'bile my Precious Child."

"Sure!" said Mickey. "I'll go tell her. And the man with her is Miss Leslie's father, just like Peter is ours; you want to show him the Child, don't you?"

"Maybe!" said Peaches with a tantalizing smirk.

"Miss Chicken, you're getting well too fast," commented Mickey in amazement as he started to the car.

Because of what Mr. Winton had said to him the previous day, he composed and delivered this greeting when he reached it: "Lily is asking to show you her Precious

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"Ain't no name for it," sai bunching children in squac something worth while with by each family taking as man and raising them personal.

"I should say I do!" ex speak to James about that and William, but I believ more."

"I know one I'd like von Winton, and Mickey never:

He managed his introdu Peaches justified her appe sweet and conspicuously a Peter in his round of making arm through that of the low Nobody is going to mix mosee what a fine hig chap Juni



Peter threw his left arm around Mickey even as he shook hands with his right: "You surely do," he said, "by law and by love, to the bottom of all our hearts."

The visit was a notable success. The buttermilk was cold, the spice cake was fresh, the apples and peaches were juicy, and the improvements highly commendable. Peter was asked if he would consider a membership in the Golf. Club, the playhouse was discussed, and three hours later a group of warm friends parted, with the agreement that Mickey was to spend a day the latter part of the week fishing on Atwater.

The Hardings smiled broadly.

"Well son, did we manage that to your satisfaction?" asked Peter.

"Sure!" said Mickey. "I might have been mistaken in what half of that trip was for, but I think not."

"So do I," said Mrs. Harding emphatically. "They were just itching to get their fingers on Peaches; and Mr. Bruce and Mr. Winton both were chagrined over our getting you first."

"We feel bad about that too, don't we, Peter?" laughed Mickey.

"Well, I would," said Peter, "if it were the other way around. I didn't mind the young fellow. You'll be with him every day, and he'll soon have boys of his own no doubt; but I feel sorry for Mr. Winton. He looks hungry when he watches you. He could work you into his business fine."

"He's all right, he's a nice man," said Mickey, "but I've

т пе птые утхен: sne sa "Sorry you didn't care fo "It is a pity!" said Leslie ing her along' any farther t ing her to the hospital to be "I'll have to go again ab "I just couldn't seem to get "No, you 'just couldn't "And Mr. Winton 'just co hands on Mickey, and bear any more than I could force I hope all of us have a realizi to be good and loyal frien Mickey to make his own as own salvation, and that of l hear you offering to buy an furniture you hoped you mi "Heavens!" cried Leslie

any one go about offering t

of a veteran collector? I feel so silly! Let's play off our chagrin, and then we'll be in condition for friendship which is the part that falls to us, if I understand Mickey."

"Well considering the taste I've had of the quality of his friendship, I hope you won't be surprised at the statement that I feel highly honoured," said Mr. Winton, leading the way, while the others thoughtfully followed.

With four days' work the Harding home began to show what was being accomplished. The song of the housewife carried to the highway, and neighbours passing went home to silent, overworked drudges, and critically examined for the first time stuffy, dark kitchens, reeking with steam, heat, and the odour of cooking and decorated with the grime of years. The little leaven of one home in the neighbourhood, as all homes should be, set them thinking, and a week had not passed until people began calling Mrs. Harding to the telephone to explain just what she was doing, and why. Men would stop to ask Peter what was going on, and every time he caught a victim, he never released him until the man saw sunrise above a kitchen table, a line in the basement for a winter wash, kitchen implements from a pot scraper and food pusher to a gas range and electric washing machine, with a furnace and hardwood floors thrown in. Soon the rip of shovelled shingles, the sound of sawing, and the ring of hammers filled the air.

The Harding improvements improved so fast, that sand, cement, and the big pile of lumber began accumulating at Peter's corner of the crossroads below the home, happiness for himself and Na pleasure over the same renew name for many of his lifelong

Mickey started on his day ticipation, but he jumped fro the Harding front walk at the He saw the Harding car at Peter sitting dressed for leisur

"Got anxious about Lily," lake I thought I heard her cal she was crying for me. The couldn't stand it. Is she asle

Peter opened his lips, but no turned a ghastly white. Pete drew out a letter, and handed i the sheet from the envelope, glanced at what he held and c moved beside him, laid a stead "He took her to the hospital?" panted Mickey.

"Yes," said Peter.

"Why did you let him?" demanded Mickey.

That helped Peter. He indicated the letter.

"There's your call for him!" he said, emphatically. "You asked me to adopt her so I could give him orders to go ahead when he came."

"Why didn't you telephone me?" asked Mickey.

"I did," said Peter. "The woman who answered didn't know where you were, but she said their car had gone to town, so I thought maybe they'd find you there. I was just going to call them again."

"Was she afraid?" wavered Mickey.

"Yes, I think she was," said Peter.

"Did she cry for me?" asked Mickey.

"Yes she did," admitted Peter, who hadn't a social lie in his being, "but when he offered to put off the examination till he might come again, she climbed from the cot and made them take her. Ma went with her."

"The Sunshine Nurse came?" questioned Mickey.

"Yes," said Peter, "and Mrs. Minturn. She sent for him to see about an operation on a child she is trying to save, and when it was over, he showed her your letter, so she brought them out in her car, and Ma went back with them."

"She may be on that glass table right now," gulped Mickey. "What time is it? When's the next car? Run me to the station will you, and if you've got any money, let me have it 'til I get to mine." a kitten," he said. "Mickethat trolley just once, to showith women and children.

"Go on!" said Mickey.

Peter smiled, and slid acro "Sit tight!" he said tersel The big car slipped up th gone frequently, passed th Mickey twisted to look bac stopping behind them and v Peter opened his lips and sai and an even start!"

The trolley came abreast a horn, and glanced that way ward jerk of his head. The his gear and the car started hands on his machinery; for racing excuse, as he long ha



MICKEY'S MIRACLE

past people who cried out at them and shook their fists. Mickey looked at Peter and registered for life each line of his big frame and lineament of his face, as he gripped the gear and put his car over the highway. When they reached the pavement, Mickey touched Peter's arm. "Won't make anything by getting arrested," he cautioned.

"No police for blocks yet," said Peter.

"Well there's risk of life and damage suit at each crossing!" shouted Mickey, and Peter slowed a degree; but he was miles ahead of all regulations as he stopped before the gleaming entrance. Mickey sprang from the car and hurried up the steps. Mrs. Minturn arose from a seat and came to meet him.

"Take me to her quick!" begged Mickey.

Silently she led the way to her suite in her old home, and opened the door. Mickey had a glimpse of Mrs. Harding, his Sunshine Nurse, and three men, one of whom he recognized from reproductions of his features in the papers. A very white, tired-looking Peaches stretched both hands and uttered a shrill cry as Mickey appeared in the doorway. His answer was inarticulate and his arms spread widely. Then Peaches arose, and in a few shuffling but sustained steps fell on his breast, and gripped him with all her strength.

"Oh darling, you'll kill yourself," wailed Mickey.

He laid her on the davenport and knelt clasping her. Peaches regained self-control first; she sat up, shamelessly wiping Mickey's eyes and her own alternately.

"Flowersy-girl, did you hurt yourself awful?"

piece yet! And it didn't hu

"Good!" shouted Peter.

"You look here Miss Cleried Mickey wonderingly.

"Oh the Doctor Carrel 1 plained Peaches, "and you name on the letter you wr and let him examination me ing alone, and taking step You've surprised me joyful as that to pay you back."

Mickey clung to his trea awed, questioning face.

"That's it!" said Peter.

days or such a matter!"

Mickey appealed to Dr. (
"How about this?" he do

"She's going to walk," sa

Mickey retreated to Peaches' neck again, and she smiled over and comforted him.

"Mickey, I knew you'd be crazy," she said. "I knew you'd be glad, but I didn't know you could be so-"

Mickey took her in his arms a second, then slowly recovered his feet and a small amount of self-possession. Again he turned to the surgeons.

"Are you sure? Will it hurt her? Will it last?"

"Quite sure," said Dr. Carrel. "Calm yourself, lad. Her case is not so unusual; only more aggravated than usual. I've examined her from crown to sole, and she's straight and sound. You have started her permanent cure; all you need is to keep on exactly as you are going, and limit her activities so that in her joy she doesn't overdo and tire herself. You are her doctor. I congratulate you!"

Dr. Carrel came forward, holding out his hand, and Mickey took it with the one of his that was not gripping Peaches and said, "Aw-a-ah!" but he was a radiant boy, and the white light on his forehead shone never so brightly.

"Thank you sir," he said. "Thank everybody. But thank you especial, over and over. I don't know how I'll ever square up with you, but I'll pay you all I have to start on. I've some money I've saved from my wages, and I'll be working harder and earning more all the time."

"But Mickey," protested the surgeon, "you don't owe me anything. I didn't operate! You had the work done before I arrived. I would have come sooner, but I knew offered me if I'd come. He Mickey gathered Peach his shoulder as he started "Thank you sir," he square."

T.

